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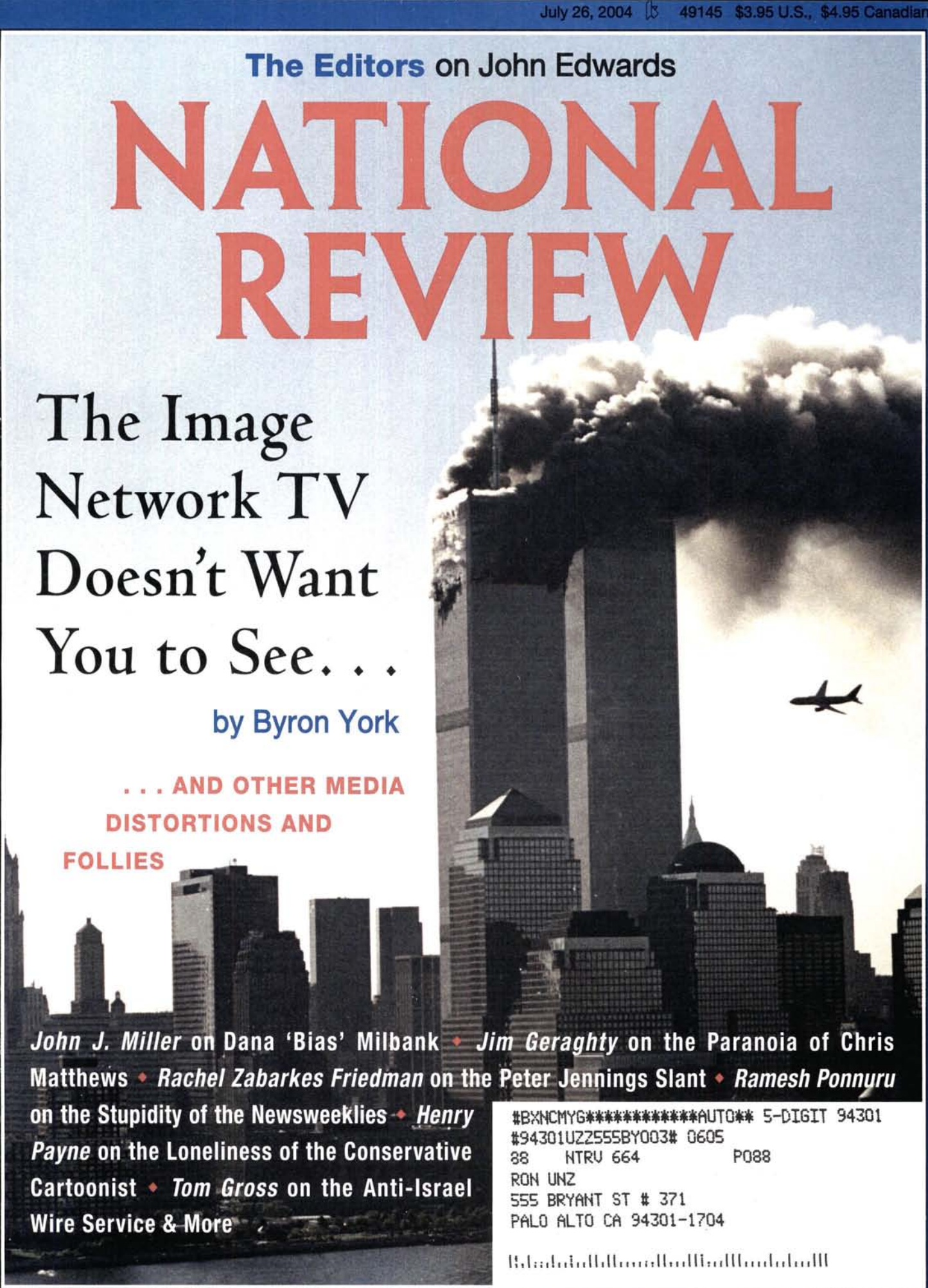
The Editors on John Edwards

NATIONAL REVIEW

The Image Network TV Doesn't Want You to See. . .

by Byron York

. . . AND OTHER MEDIA DISTORTIONS AND FOLLIES



John J. Miller **on Dana 'Bias' Milbank** ◆ ***Jim Geraghty*** **on the Paranoia of Chris Matthews** ◆ ***Rachel Zabarkes Friedman*** **on the Peter Jennings Slant** ◆ ***Ramesh Ponnuru*** **on the Stupidity of the Newsweeklies** ◆ ***Henry Payne*** **on the Loneliness of the Conservative Cartoonist** ◆ ***Tom Gross*** **on the Anti-Israel Wire Service & More**

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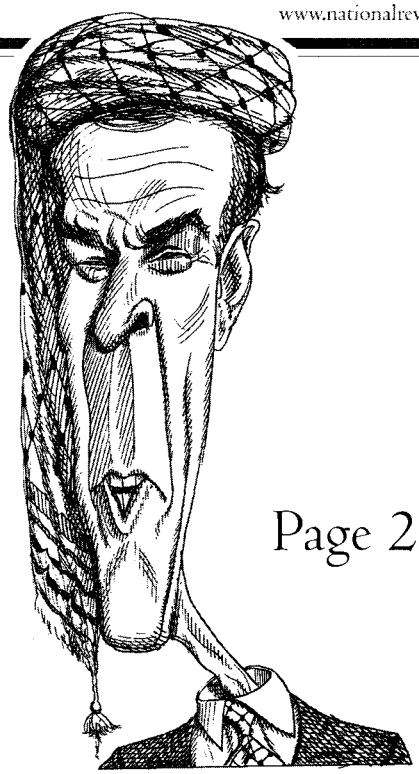

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letters to the editor

THE 40TH PRESIDENT

As someone who describes himself as Irish by birth, German by descent, and American by destiny, I would like to offer my condolences to your entire nation (and, soon enough, mine) on the passing of Ronald Reagan. I have no fear that Reagan's achievements will be forgotten: Today's map of Europe and NATO membership list are all there is to know.

Thomas Reitz
Dublin, Ire.

I remember a Reagan story from defense secretary Caspar Weinberger.

He had discovered that the recommendation to award the Medal of Honor to Special Forces Sergeant Roy Benavidez had been languishing over at the Pentagon throughout the Carter years. Neither Weinberger nor Reagan could believe it, since Benavidez's real-life heroics were too incredible for even a movie script. Under withering fire, Benavidez had rescued eight comrades, retrieved classified documents, patched up the wounded, and called in air strikes—all while suffering multiple wounds so severe that he was zipped into a body bag.

Reagan asked Weinberger the details of the Medal of Honor ceremony, which Weinberger reeled off, ending with ". . . and then the citation is read by a soldier with a trained voice."

Reagan quietly said, "I have a trained voice."

On February 24, 1981, Special Forces Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez was awarded the Medal of Honor after President Reagan himself read the citation.

John Connolly
Harrisburg, Pa.

Jay Nordlinger's essay on President Reagan and his effect on him ("A Name of My Own," June 28) really hit home. I am a bit Nordlinger's junior; I was in seventh grade when Reagan took office. I too remember the Carter years. I remember watching the evening news with my father and hearing about the hostage crisis, the poor economy, etc. I remember being profoundly confused, even as a nine- or ten-year-old, about why the United States—which my grandmother and parents had always told me was the greatest place on earth—seemed to be in such trouble. Then along came Reagan. I followed him closely through high school and into college. His beliefs about America's place in the world, and in history, shaped my views. It was obvious that he loved America and those who call themselves Americans. I think that was the secret to his success.

During the service in Simi Valley, Michael Reagan talked about the "gifts" his father had given him. It made me realize what a gift President Reagan had given me—a profound love of my country and its history. I never knew my real grandfathers, but I feel that President Reagan was my surrogate one. I have missed him for a long time.

Randy L. Varner
Boiling Springs, Pa.

Nordlinger cited the old feminist slogan "A fetus in a woman's womb has no more standing than a hamburger in her stomach." That slogan would not be usable today. As we all know, thanks to the fine folks at PETA, "meat is murder," whereas, of course, abortion is not. Interesting to note how, on the "conservative" side, the positions are reversed.

David Skorka
Annandale, Va.

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Price Controls on Gasoline? Bad Idea

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Americans are understandably upset by the high prices they've been paying for gasoline. Many think that the cause is oil company greed and that the solution is government-enforced price controls. But price controls on gasoline are a terrible idea. They would cause shortages and lineups and would hurt producers and consumers.

Here's why. What determines the price of gasoline is the amount producers are willing to supply at various prices and the amount drivers demand at various prices. At the current price of gasoline, say $2.00, the amount drivers want to buy roughly equals the amount producers want to sell. That's why there are no gas lines. Such a "market-clearing price" evolves in every competitive market.

What happens, then, when the government decrees that the price of gasoline be no higher than, say, $1.80. The obvious answer is that consumers now can get their gas for 20 cents a gallon less. But that answer is incomplete.

At a price of $1.80, consumers will want more than they wanted at $2.00. One of the things economists are surest of is that we want more of a good when its price falls. At that lower price, producers want to supply less. The necessary result, therefore, is a shortage: the amount demanded exceeds the amount supplied.

Shortages lead to lineups. Consumers then compete with one another, not just by paying money but by spending time in line. Economists call this lost time a "deadweight loss," a loss to some that is a gain to none.

During the 1979 gasoline shortage, I calculated that the 80-cent-per-gallon price control caused consumers to spend about $1.10 a gallon (30 cents per gallon in lost time) and that if the price controls had been removed, the market-clearing price of gasoline would have been $1.00. Consumers actually paid more than they would have without price controls, and producers made 20 cents less. Both lost.

Many people are convinced that high gasoline prices are due to oil companies' greed. But that explanation is insufficient. Why such sudden greed? Weren't oil companies greedy a year ago, when prices were lower? To explain a change in something, you need to point to something that changed.

What changed is the world price of oil, which increased by about $14 between May 2003 and May 2004. Each dollar increase in the price of oil translates into roughly a 2.5-cent increase in gasoline prices. About 35 cents of the 50-cent-per-gallon increase in the price of gasoline, therefore, is due to world market conditions, one of which is the reduced oil production in Iraq.

Also, federal regulations fragment what was once a national gasoline market. The Environmental Protection Agency decrees that certain kinds of gasoline be used in certain regions. When a refinery or pipeline goes down in certain markets, such as California, gasoline sellers can't legally buy from other markets. The result: wild swings in gasoline prices. The regulations also make gasoline more expensive.

Price controls are a bad idea. Here's a better one: reduce gasoline taxes.

—David R. Henderson

David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an economics professor at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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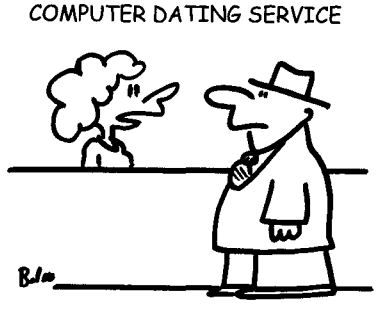

"This could take a while, unless you're willing to consider a transvestite."

■ In *The Hotline*'s survey of state polls, President **Bush** leads in 26 states worth 227 electoral votes and **John Kerry** leads in 18 states worth 218 electoral votes (270 needed to win). . . . *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll: Bush 45 percent, Kerry 44 percent, and **Ralph Nader** 4 percent. . . . In two-way race, Bush and Kerry tie at 47 percent. . . . Bush: "Fifteen months ago, Saddam's regime was an enemy of America and the civilized world. Today Iraq's government is an ally of both." . . . Bush on terrorists in Iraq: "They can't whip our militaries. What they can do is get on your TV screens and stand in front of your TV cameras and cut somebody's head off, in order to try to cause us to cringe and retreat. That's their strongest weapon." . . . Vice President **Cheney**: "America is safer, and the world is more secure, because Iraq and Afghanistan are now partners in the struggle against terror, instead of sanctuaries for terrorist networks." . . . In Fox News poll, 50 percent say going to war with Iraq was "right thing to do," and 42 percent say it was "wrong thing." . . . Prime-time speakers at GOP convention will include former New York mayor **Rudy Giuliani**, Sen. **Zell Miller** (D., Ga.), and Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** (R., Calif.).

■ Kerry: "I oppose abortion, personally. I don't like abortion. I believe life does begin at conception." . . . More Kerry: "George Bush talked about being a uniter, not a divider. But he's been the greatest divider as a president in the modern history of this country." . . . Fox News poll: 56 percent of Democrats say they're more patriotic than average American, compared with 74 percent of Republicans. . . . As Florida Democrats try to keep Ralph Nader off ballot, state GOP chairman **Carol Jean Jordan** issues statement: "Democrats are quick to use the issue of voter disenfranchisement to their benefit and yet have no problem unleashing their legal sharks on Ralph Nader." . . . Florida Democratic chairman **Scott Maddox**, in *Miami Herald*: "This isn't part of any huge concentrated effort, it's making sure he abides by the law, which should not be an unreasonable request." . . . Sen. **Hillary Clinton** (D., N.Y.) on Bush tax cuts: "We're saying, 'You know what? For America to get back on track and be fiscally responsible, we're probably going to cut that short and not give it to you. We're going to take things away from you on behalf of the common good.'"

■ **Bill Clinton**'s book causes trouble for **Erskine Bowles**, his former chief of staff, now running for Senate in North Carolina. Republican challenger Rep. **Richard Burr** says Bowles is running away from his record on trade and tobacco. . . . Gov. **Bill Owens** (R., Colo.) on running for president in 2008, in *The American Enterprise*: "The chances are that I won't. It's not something I'm thinking about or planning toward." . . . In South Carolina Senate race, Rep. **Jim DeMint** (R.) leads state education superintendent **Inez Tenenbaum** (D.), 47 percent to 41 percent, according to Public Opinion Strategies poll. . . . In Pennsylvania, former Rep. **Ron Klink** (D.) endorses Sen. **Arlen Specter** (R.) over challenger, Rep. **Joe Hoeffel** (D.).

■ **Michael Reagan** comes out against embryonic-stem-cell research. . . . Solicitor general **Ted Olson** says he will leave Justice Department and return to private practice. . . . In survey of black students at elite colleges and universities, 41 percent identify themselves as immigrants, children of immigrants, or as mixed race, reports *New York Times*. . . . "You need a philosophical discussion about what are the aims of affirmative action," says Harvard's **Mary C. Waters**. "If it's about having diversity that includes African Americans from the South or from inner-city high schools, then you're not doing well." . . . In Zogby poll, 82 percent of Hispanics say illegal aliens should be allowed to become citizens. . . . Global revenues for *The Passion* top $600 million. . . . "I want to thank all the right-wing organizations out there who tried to stop this movie either through harassment campaigns, going to the FEC to get our ads removed from television, or the things said on television," says *Fahrenheit 9/11* director **Michael Moore**. "They have only encouraged more people to go and see it." . . . Winner of this year's **Eric Breindel** Award for Excellence in Opinion Journalism—given by News Corp.—is *Wall Street Journal*'s **Daniel Henninger**.

■ BBC, notorious for its biased Mideast coverage, starts a 24-hour Arabic network. . . . U.S. expels two security guards working at Iran's U.N. mission for videotaping New York City landmarks. . . . **Saddam Hussein**, in Iraqi courtroom: "The real criminal is Bush." . . . Iraqi prime minister **Iyad Allawi**, on NBC News: "I believe very strongly that Saddam had relations with al-Qaeda. We know Saddam had relationships with a lot of terrorists and international terrorism. Now, whether he is directly connected to the September atrocities or not, I can't vouch for this, but definitely I know he has connections with extremism and terrorists." . . . In France, approval rating of President **Jacques Chirac** sinks to 35 percent, from 50 percent last summer. . . . Pro-Western candidate **Boris Tadic** wins Serbian presidential election.

■ From **David Letterman**'s Top Ten Things Overheard in Line at the Clinton Book Signing: "Those aren't Secret Service agents—those are Hillary's people keeping an eye on him." **NR**

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The Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece.

A Great Teacher

Thomas F. X. Noble (Ph.D., Michigan State University) is a noted history teacher at the University of Notre Dame. While teaching at the University of Virginia, he won the Alumni Distinguished Professor award. He holds three fellowships and is the author of numerous articles and books.

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THE WEEK

■ Since our last issue, Iraq has been handed over to the Iraqis, and the Democratic party to the trial lawyers.

■ The lineup of speakers for the Republican National Convention is a tribute to Nelson Rockefeller. It is assuredly not a picture of the modern Republican party. George Pataki, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mike Bloomberg, Rudy Giuliani, and John McCain will be taking the podium to address a party of which they are not representative. No conservative besides Bush and Cheney has a primetime speaking slot. Millions of faithful Catholics support the president; three pro-abortion Catholics will be addressing them. The only speaker who agrees with the party's nominee on most major issues is a Democrat, Sen. Zell Miller. We will be told that the lineup makes political sense. Liberal Republicans will win favorable media and appeal to swing voters. Actually, liberal Republicans will get favorable media for themselves at the expense of the party. The Democrats are just as keen as the Republicans on winning swing voters, but they are not turning over their convention slots to John Breaux and Cal Dooley. But then, the Democrats are not ashamed of who they are.

■ So Vice President Cheney said the F-word to Sen. Patrick Leahy. Do we want vice presidents talking like (*vide* the Nixon tapes, or memoirs of the LBJ era) presidents? Under extreme provocation, the great statesman has two options open to him. One is to follow the example of John Randolph of Roanoke, the brilliant crazy congressman of the early 19th century, when he was accused of not being manly. (Randolph was beardless, and his voice never broke.) "You pride yourself," he said, "on a faculty in which your slave is your equal and your ass your superior." The other option is to follow the example of the French diplomat Talleyrand, after the emperor Napoleon screamed at him for half an hour, calling him everything from a cripple to a cuckold (both, indeed, true). Talleyrand bore the torrent in silence, only remarking as he limped off, "It is a pity that a great man should be so ill bred." In other words: nuclear war, or sang-froid. Rappers, stand-up comics, and twelve-year-old boys need not apply.

■ "I oppose abortion, personally," says John Kerry. "I don't like abortion. I believe life does begin at conception. But I can't take my Catholic belief, my article of faith, and legislate it on a Protestant or a Jew or an atheist . . . who doesn't share it. We have separation of church and state in the United States of America." If Kerry believes that abortion kills a human being—and it is reasonable to infer from his comment about conception that he does believe that proposition—then it is awfully tepid of him to say that he does not "like" it. But then, it is also odd that he shrinks from prohibiting it. It takes a moment's reflection to see that opposition to abortion is not an

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ROMAN GENN

"article of faith" in the way that the Virgin Birth is. Non-Catholics, indeed atheists, have reached the conclusion that abortion is a form of killing that should generally be banned. Can it really be Kerry's position that their conclusion is rendered suspect by the fact that the Catholic church agrees with it? Kerry wants to say that he agrees with his church about abortion (the practice is wrong) but not about public policy about abortion. But the "Catholic belief" about abortion is not just that it is wrong, but that it is wrong because it is a form of unjustified killing, that reason can demonstrate this point, and that allowing it is therefore unjust. Kerry's straddle is based on the idea that reason and religion are in conflict, and that the state must side with the former. But he's made a hash of both reason and religion. Which we oppose, personally.

■ Kerry announced that he opposes granting driver's licenses to illegal aliens. Among Democrats, this may qualify as something like statesmanship, given their party's usual subservience to the pleadings of Hispanic lobbying groups. ("Let me take a deep breath here," said a shocked and disappointed Cecilia Munoz of the National Council of La Raza, when she heard what Kerry said.) But the statesmanship lasted only a few hours. Kerry quickly trotted out a campaign aide to assure concerned liberals that the candidate didn't really plan to prevent states from issuing licenses to lawbreakers. Apparently the notion that illegal aliens don't deserve driver's licenses is another one of those deeply held personal convictions that Kerry wouldn't dream of imposing on anybody.

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■ Republican Jack Ryan was forced to end his campaign for the Senate from Illinois after the *Chicago Tribune* got a judge to release his divorce records. Those records included his ex-wife's allegation that he had asked her to have sex with him in public in a club where such behavior was not out of the ordinary. Ryan has been arguing in the alternative, as they say: It never happened, and even if it did it would not have violated the law or the Ten Commandments. The *Tribune*, and the judge, say that the file had to be opened so that people would not think that the court was showing favoritism; most divorce records are open. This rationale is flimsy, since most people's divorce records are not in danger of appearing on the *Tribune*'s front page; it is not favoritism to protect only those who need protecting. The *Tribune* is on better ground in saying that the allegation shed light on Ryan's fitness for office. It would be dogmatic to assert, as some people do, that private sexual conduct can reveal nothing about character and that character is irrelevant to office. We do not regret that Ryan left the race once the information was out. But there is a lot of information that could be relevant to a voter's decision. How the candidate treats his children and has conducted himself with his girlfriends over the years might very well tell voters something about whether he is the kind of man they wish to reward with high office. But there have to be bounds of privacy and propriety. The search for indecency can itself be indecent, and was here.

■ The Senate is preparing to vote on the Federal Marriage Amendment. A lot of senators seem inclined to present themselves as "personally opposed" to same-sex marriage: They are against it, they do not want judges to impose it, but they will do nothing to stop the judges, either. The most common dodge is that the issue should be decided state by state. In other words: Let state judges impose same-sex marriage as a prelude to federal judges' imposing it nationally. We hope that pro-amendment senators have the wit to expose the emptiness of the opponents' position, and that the media will cover the arguments fairly. (Yeah, right.) If the senators do not pass the amendment, however, they should be under no illusion that this issue is going away.

■ All along, conservatives have said that the McCain-Feingold law restricted political speech. Liberals seemed either to disagree, or not to mind. Since the law took effect, they have been dismayed by how much money Bush has been able to raise under the new rules. They may have an additional reason for regret soon: Michael Moore is in the law's crosshairs. McCain-Feingold restricts advertisements that refer to federal candidates within 30 days of a primary, or 60 days of a general election. *Fahrenheit 9/11* does more than "refer" to Bush. If Moore advertises it between July 30 and Aug. 30 (the date of the Republican convention, which is considered a primary), or between Sept. 2 and Nov. 2 (the general election), he may be breaking campaign-finance law. Unsurprisingly, the filmmaker is labeling calls for a crackdown "a violation of [his] First Amendment rights." He has a point. May we suggest a repeal of the law?

■ We miss Harvey Pitt. Bush's first appointee to run the Securities and Exchange Commission, Pitt was run out of town when he was slow to join the regulatory hysteria that gripped Washington during the accounting scandals. His successor, William Donaldson, learned all too well from that lesson. He has responded to the political imperative to "do something" about the mutual-fund scandals by siding with the Democrats on the commission. They want to require that mutual-fund boards have "independent" chairmen. Financial journalist James Glassman puts it this way: The regulators believe that the way to prevent misconduct, and to lower fees, is to make it possible for an investor to go to the board of his mutual fund and ask them to switch managers. The chairman, being independent of management, will entertain the request without prejudice. But there is a simpler alternative: The investor can just sell his shares and buy somewhere else. He can, if he wants, sell mutual funds with insider chairmen and buy mutual funds with "independent" chairmen. It is called the free market. But apparently it is not well understood these days, even at the SEC under this president.

■ Congress has tried to restrict minors' access to online pornography by requiring porn sites to verify the age of their viewers (by, for example, getting a credit card number). Most people, especially parents, consider this a modest restriction on adults' freedom that serves a worthy goal. The courts have repeatedly blocked the law, however, on the theory that it violates "well-established First Amendment principles," as Supreme Court justice Anthony Kennedy put it in the latest decision. The Court's principles are not to be confused with the actual amendment. Images are not "speech," which is what the amendment protects. Most pornography could therefore be banned altogether without bringing the amendment into play. Many conservatives have observed that this Court seems more inclined to strike down laws regulating pornography than laws regulating political speech. The complaint is, indeed, becoming something of a conservative cliché. Perhaps because it is true.

■ Following recent visits to refugee camps by Colin Powell and Kofi Annan, Sudan is pledging to mend its ways. It has been backing Arab militias that have been trying to wipe out the black Muslim population of Darfur, but now it will supposedly disarm them. It will provide security so that desperately needed humanitarian assistance can get through. But the government gave similar assurances whenever foreigners took notice of its 20-year campaign of genocide against Christians in the south—and none of those assurances kept it from killing 2 million people. The Sudanese government continues to insist that the world's worst humanitarian crisis has been "greatly overblown." Government troops fired on students attempting to give Annan a petition denouncing the treatment of refugees. Both Powell and Annan were escorted to a rare well-maintained "tourist camp" rather than to one of the 100-plus ramshackle settlements where scores of refugees are dying daily from starvation and disease. When Sen. Sam Brownback, a Republican from Kansas, returned from Darfur in early July, he called on the world to respond because the United States alone cannot keep Sudan from causing "death on a massive scale." If the U.N. allows itself to be stalled by Sudan's deceit and denial, it will be responsible for another Rwanda.

■ For a short time there, it looked as though Stephen Harper's Conservative party was going to storm Canada and roust the

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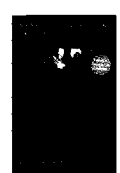

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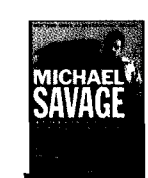

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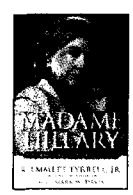

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THE WEEK...

once-impregnable Liberals from office. Paul Martin, the Liberal leader, came across as distinctly worried in the weeks before the June 28 election. As well he might: Owing to a combination of a newly invigorated Right, the public's weariness with the self-appointed Natural Party of Government, and evidence of Liberal graft in Quebec, his poll figures were dropping fast. So Martin started to warn that Harper had a "hidden agenda" of restricting immigration, cutting services, and making Canada American. Terrified Canadians decided to put safety first. Still, Harper's Conservatives did well enough prevent the Liberals from forming a majority government. Martin must now rely on the far-left New Democratic party—the Canadian equivalent of the Naderites—to keep him in power. That can't be much fun.

■ The International Court of Justice in The Hague is shortly to rule on the legality of the fence due to separate Israelis and Palestinians on the West Bank, and a debate in the U.N. is likely to follow—more an outcry than a debate, really. Roughly one quarter of this fence is now in position, and the improvement in security is already remarkable. For three months, there has been no successful suicide bomber. The line of the fence is particularly difficult to establish in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Lawyers representing 35,000 Palestinians from eight villages there went to court, claiming that the fence infringed on their rights and livelihoods. The Israeli supreme court found in their favor, ordering the army to reroute some 20 miles of the fence. Humanitarian considerations, in other words, have priority over security even when terror is on the loose. Israel's critics might care to ponder that.

■ Back in April the government of China told the people of Hong Kong that, contrary to their hopes, there would be no general elections in the territory for at least eight years. The present system, in which most Hong Kong legislators, as well as the chief executive, are chosen by Beijing-friendly interest groups, will continue. To soften the blow, Beijing then made conciliatory gestures, including the temporary loan of a precious religious relic, one of Lord Buddha's fingers. Now the Hong Kongers have responded with a gesture of their own, one also involving a finger, at least metaphorically. On the very day set as a public holiday to commemorate Hong Kong's 1997 handover from British to Chinese rule, there was a huge protest march through the city's downtown area. At least one in 30 of Hong Kong's people took part, the proportional equivalent of 10 million Americans out in the street protesting—and in a heat wave. The demonstrators carried signs saying "Democracy for Hong Kong," and even "End One-Party Rule: Establish a Democratic China." Seven years after returning to the warm bosom of the Motherland, Hong Kong's people still have not gotten the hang of living under Communism, it seems.

■ Britain's House of Lords has foiled an attempt to make the smacking of children illegal. We quote without comment, but with some italics of our own, from one of the newspaper reports: "Tony Blair said the Government wanted to *strike* a balance between protecting children and parents' rights to discipline. . . . Labour peers had been ordered by *whips* to vote against the outright ban . . ." The British were once famous child-beaters, as signified by the names their novelists gave to schoolmasters: Wackford Squeers in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Thwackum in *Tom Jones*, and so on. Nobody should repine for those days, but a slap on the hand for a naughty child is well within the scope of normal parental discipline. If this ban had become law, it would have been one more victory for the nanny-knows-best virtuecrats over normal life and ancient liberties, and one more aspect of the autonomy of the family would have been erased by state power masquerading as humanitarian concern.

■ The organizing principle of American public life in the 21st century will apparently be that everything tends to a TV "reality show." Corporate America has led the way, with real-estate magnate Donald Trump currently the star of NBC's hit *The Apprentice*. Now the political sphere has caught the infection, with sometime Democratic presidential hopeful Al Sharpton signing up with Spike TV to host a show titled *I Hate My Job*. The idea is that Sharpton and a "life counselor" will try to help people get out of jobs they are unhappy with and into ones to which they are ideally suited. Now, it is easy to smile at Sharpton, who has a nice line in quips. It is not so easy to forget the corpses and wrecked lives his public career has left in its wake: at the Crown Heights pogrom, the Tawana Brawley hoax, the Freddy's Fashion Mart massacre. It is a sorry comment on our times that this odious buffoon should be able to acquire celebrity status. The only silver lining here is that his new line of work will presumably offer Sharpton few opportunities for defamation, Jew-baiting, and so on.

■ When Bill Cosby criticized blacks for not making use of the opportunities afforded by the *Brown* decision, some accused him of airing dirty laundry in public. Cosby returned to his theme at a Rainbow/PUSH Coalition meeting early in July. "Let me tell you something: Your dirty laundry gets out of school at 2:30 every day, it's cursing and calling each other 'niggers' as they're walking up and down the street. They think they're hip. They can't write. They're laughing and giggling, and they're going nowhere." A class of people is not likely to be redeemed by one man's exhortations, no matter how admirable. Good behavior is the product of good habits, and the good habits of

THE ROAD TO OZ

The scarecrow didn't have a brain.
The woodsman had no heart.
The lion cowered as he roared:
John Edwards, for a start.
Has chased an ambulance like mad
And made a pile of dough—
That's all—which would have underwhelmed
Dorothy and Toto.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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Abandoning Gaza

Would Israel's withdrawal from Gaza lead to peace?

Prime Minister Sharon of Israel, under enormous pressure by the U.S. government to "do something," has agreed to vacate Israeli settlements in Gaza, together with certain settlements in Samaria (the northern "West Bank"), in hopes that this might lead to an end of the bloody Arab/Israeli conflict. Perhaps not too surprisingly, Mr. Sharon's own Likud party has overwhelmingly rejected the plan. But that is certainly not the end of it. It is bound to be resurrected.

What are the facts?

A brief history. The primary error is that Gaza belongs to its mostly Arab inhabitants. Gaza, which had previously been a province of the Ottoman Empire, became after the First World War part of the British Mandate of Palestine. In 1947, the U.N proposed to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab sectors. The Jews accepted the partition– the Arabs rejected it out of hand, and in 1948, on the very day of Israel's founding, five Arab armies invaded the nascent Jewish state. Miraculously, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But after that war, Jordan remained in occupation of the "West Bank" and the eastern part of Jerusalem. Egypt stayed in control of the Gaza strip. It remained there until after the Six-Day War of 1967, when, in one of the most astonishing actions in military history, Israel once again defeated the combined Arab might. At the end of that brief but decisive conflict, Israel found itself in possession of all of the areas that the Arabs had previously occupied, including the Gaza strip. After it assumed administration of the Strip in 1967, Israel made every effort to improve the life of the Gazans, and to provide decent housing and infrastructure. All such efforts were rebuffed by the Arabs, who preferred keeping the Gazans in miserable "refugee camps," where they would fester in squalor for over fifty years, dreaming of bloody vengeance against Israel.

> "A better idea: ...move all Jews from Gaza and even from the 'West Bank,' and repatriate them to 'Israel proper.' But at the same time, evacuate all Arabs from Israel and resettle them...wherever they might want to go."

A very poor plan. If Jewish "settlements" in Gaza were to be abandoned, it would be understood as a victory for terrorism. Inevitably, if Israeli settlers and the Israeli military were to leave the area, the terror emanating from Gaza would increase, the violence would explode. The Gaza terrorists, no longer restrained by the Israeli military, would launch hundreds more rockets, missiles and mortar rounds into Israel. Short of blanketing the area with massive artillery and air strikes, which would cause tens of thousands of deaths (and which the world would not allow to happen), Israel would stand defenseless against such onslaughts.

In proposing the abandonment of Gaza by its approximately 7,500 Jewish inhabitants, who, in stark contrast to the Arabs surrounding them, have created prosperous communities, industries and agriculture in the area, there is nothing at all that the Israelis are expected to receive for such an enormous sacrifice. There isn't even a promise – though it would in any case be quite meaningless – to abstain from violence. In accepting a plan to vacate Gaza, Israel would effectively relinquish the right of its citizens to live anywhere they wish in the land of Israel. Such right is unquestioningly granted to the Arabs. They live in Gaza, of course, and in the "West Bank". Over one million of them live in Israel proper, where they have equal rights with the Jews and enjoy all benefits of citizenship.

The plan for the Jewish inhabitants to vacate Gaza is a thoroughly bad one. It would acknowledge that, in order to be acceptable to the Arabs, Gaza had to be "judenrein" – free of Jews – a concept invented by the Nazis. It would reward terror and would be understood as a sign of weakness. It would leave the Arabs at complete liberty to import the most destructive weapons through their port and their airport. Nobody doubts that they would do just that. It would not bring the solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict one step closer – on the contrary, it would exacerbate it and very likely result in full-fledged war, quite possibly involving weapons of mass destruction.

But here's a better idea: Yes, move all Jews from Gaza and even from those parts of the "West Bank," that might eventually be ceded to form an autonomous Arab entity and repatriate them to "Israel proper." But at the same time, evacuate all Arabs from Israel and resettle them in Gaza, the "West Bank," or wherever they might want to go. Such exchange of populations would be drastic, but certainly not unprecedented. The vast exchange of Muslims and non-Muslims on the Indian subcontinent, though accompanied by much bloodshed, is perhaps the best and ultimately most successful example of such population exchange.

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THE WEEK...

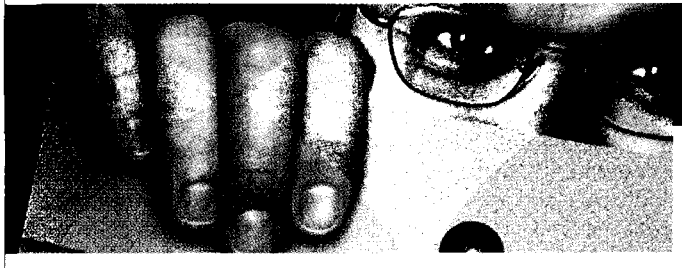
individuals are encouraged by the good behavior of their peers and betters. Other black leaders have to make the case; they should stop wasting time and energy making the bad case of eternal victimization; and American society as a whole has to stop colluding with mischief-makers.

■ Monica Lewinsky has been reading Bill Clinton's book *My Life*, and has taken mighty umbrage at his characterization of their affair as a trivial flirtation. Says the lady, "I can understand someone wanting to save his presidency. But I don't accept that he had to completely desecrate my character, which not only affected me, but my family, my friends, and my future." Ah, Monica: "When lovely woman stoops to folly, / And finds too late that men betray, / What charm can soothe her melancholy? / What art can wash her tears away?"

■ *People* has named Jason West, the 27-year-old gay-marrying mayor of New Paltz, N.Y., as one of The 50 Hottest Bachelors. Congratulations, Jason. You have discovered a secret of our time: queer-philia as a way to pick up girls.

■ Researchers at universities in Canada and Austria have completed a study of almost half a century's worth of *Playboy* centerfolds, from 1953 to 2001. Their conclusion is that the characteristic differences between men and women are becoming less pronounced. Women shown in the centerfolds are now less shapely and closer to male proportions than they were in the first Eisenhower administration. "Over time, bust size and hip size decreased, while waist size increased . . . Waist:hip ratio, waist:bust ratio, and androgyny index increased." The way things have been going lately, it's just good to know that the centerfold playmates are still female. Still, you have to admire the diligence and persistence of these researchers. The things people put themselves through in the name of science!

■ Marlon Brando had begun to go before he died, sinking into sloth, scandal, and foolishness; like many entertainers, before and after him, he did penance for his flaws with PC politics.



It's a Wonderful Lie

FAHRENHEIT 9/11 is "a 110-minute hatchet job that doesn't even bother to pretend to be fair." Michael Moore mixes "sober outrage with mischievous humor and blithely [violates] the boundary between documentary and demagoguery." It is "a partisan rallying cry, an angry polemic, a muckraking inquisition." "*Fahrenheit 9/11* never pretends to be an objective study—it's loaded with spin, sins of omission and obvious vitriol." "Contradictions run rampant": The war in Afghanistan should not have been fought, but we didn't send enough troops; homeland security is Orwellian and too relaxed; Bush is a crafty tyrant and moron.

These are all from *rave* reviews of the film. It's hard to recall a similar moment in American discourse. One after another, leading liberal commentators have said a) that Michael Moore is a consummate liar, propagandist, and "cheap shot artist," and b) that he is a force for good, a prophet, "a credit to the republic" (in the words of the *New York Times*). Aren't these things at odds with one another?

Often the liberal schizophrenia over Moore is laid bare in the plain text. William Raspberry says the movie does "a masterful job of connecting the dots between Saudi money and the business interests of the president and his friends. And it is an overwrought piece of propaganda."

The rationalization employed to weld together these two disparate views is itself schizophrenic. Almost all of Moore's countless defenders or apologists argue a) that even though he is dishonest, he's a valuable outsider who speaks to a "higher truth" and raises important, discomforting issues, and b) that he is the Left's answer to Rush Limbaugh.

Here again we see that getting to the bottom of liberal confusion is like peeling an onion. Haven't we been told time and again that Rush Limbaugh is a fascist hack and liar? I do not recall the *New York Times*'s hailing Rush as "a credit to the republic" for his willingness to raise discomforting issues. Whatever Limbaugh's merits, how do Limbaugh-haters make the case for Moore by comparing him to a man they have so thoroughly demonized? Defending one vice as virtuous by comparing it to another vice is a logical train wreck.

The title of "valuable provocateur" is reserved solely for those who provoke from the left. No one expects Limbaugh to get an Emmy. Moore has already won an Oscar for *Bowling for Columbine*, and *Fahrenheit 9/11* won the Palme d'Or at Cannes (and who can doubt the Academy will bestow laurels on Moore next time?). The chairman of the DNC has embraced even the kookiest parts of the film, and Paul Krugman insists that the film is a "public service." But, yeah, Moore is the "outsider."

The reviewers are at least honest about their intellectual dishonesty. Over and over they testify that their love of Moore is driven by a hatred of Bush, disgust with conservatives, and a desire for rhetorical revenge. Raspberry explicitly says Moore-love is a relative of the sentiment that causes decent middle-class blacks to cheer Louis Farrakhan. The honesty is appreciated, but some comments are best directed at therapists.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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The Glorious Shame of The Catholic Church

There are two levels of reality in today's Catholic Church. There is the level of magisterial teaching and the level of ordinary parish life (not all parishes, but still way too many). From the first level we learn that there are serious sins: premarital sex, adultery, abortion, homosexual behavior, etc. But at the second level we hear nothing about any of that.

Why not? Some pastors do believe what the Church teaches, but are afraid to preach it. They're garden-variety cowards. But there are other pastors who don't teach it because they *don't believe it*. And because they don't believe it, they don't adhere to it in their personal lives. They live sinfully duplicitous lives. And the truth is coming out.

Contrast this situation with that of the Episcopal Church over the past forty or so years. The Episcopal Church once taught high moral standards too. And many of their priests didn't adhere to them either. In Episcopalian circles there have been lots of stories about pedophile priests, actively homosexual priests, etc. But these stories didn't hit the headlines of newspapers, didn't make the covers of the news magazines, didn't get featured on TV. No one blew the whistle.

Why the difference? Before you accuse the media, consider how in the Old Testament, when Israel fell into idolatry and unrighteousness, the LORD punished her. The Catholic Church is the New Israel, the one true Church. The LORD will simply not let her go her own way. Remember the words of Hebrews 12:5-8,11: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD.... For whom the LORD loves He chastens.... If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening...then you are illegitimate and not sons.... Chastening seems...grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness...."

The Episcopal Church, however appealing in some ways, is not the one true Church (and has never claimed to be). The LORD has simply let that church go her gay and goofy way.

These are times of chastisement for the Catholic Church. Christ will simply not allow His wayward Bride to become a slut. Just read the Signs of the Times!

Christ is letting Catholics — especially those in the hierarchy — know that the moral rot and the dissent that justifies it must stop. All seminaries must teach the truth, not heresy. The pink-palace atmosphere of certain seminaries must end. Pastors must model and teach the moral doctrine of the Church. The time of purgation has arrived.

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THE WEEK...

Even his great performances—in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *On the Waterfront*, *The Godfather*—show their age: His school of acting, meant to harness raw passion, was named the Method—a telling admission of its artifice. Yet he had his day. Those who lived through it felt his power. R.I.P.

■ *2001: A Space Odyssey* was Stanley Kubrick's hyperformalist rendition of an Arthur Clarke science-fiction novel that became a light show for potheads. Truth is always stranger and more wonderful than even the strangest fiction, as the pictures of Saturn's rings, beamed back to us from space, show. Nothing could be as marvelous as these patterns of dark and light, made by dust and ice dancing to the laws of gravity—unless it is the curiosity of the creatures from another planet who observe them, or (greatest of all) the pleasure of the Maker of dust, ice, laws, and creatures.

CAMPAIGN 2004

The Edwards Pick

WITH the selection of John Edwards, John Kerry has shown that he is more ambitious than self-indulgent. It would have been natural for Kerry to carry resentments from the primaries. He could reasonably have feared that Edwards's fans in the press would write that Kerry will be upstaged by his running mate. Kerry decided that Edwards would help him win the election, and all merely personal considerations were laid aside.

We are inclined to think that Kerry's calculation was correct: Edwards brings real strengths to the Democratic ticket. He is an attractive figure. Voters seem to respond to youth, energy, and good looks. Edwards may also help Kerry appeal to centrist voters: Americans outside the South have a dated perception of how conservative southern Democrats are. Edwards's campaign speech, though centered on the idea that Americans who are not rich have little hope of making it on their own, somehow comes across as optimistic. So Kerry may find himself competing with Edwards over who can better excite the crowds. The competition may be good for Kerry. Edwards does not much help him win voters concerned about national security—but Kerry was always going to have to stand or fall on his own in this area.

Republicans will be tempted to make an issue of Edwards's background as a trial lawyer. They should not overestimate the extent to which the public at large shares their dislike of trial lawyers. They make their money, after all, by telling sympathetic stories that win over ordinary people.

Edwards does, however, have weaknesses. He has a very liberal voting record. Kerry-Edwards is the least ideologically balanced ticket the Democrats have run since 1984. Edwards reinforces the protectionist cast of the ticket, and of the contemporary Democratic party. While many voters worry about jobs going abroad, how well does that worrying comport with the optimism that the campaign wishes to project?

Edwards believes that President Bush, by trying to end the tax code's bias against savings, has sided with "wealth" over "work." Edwards is therefore very nearly making a frontal assault on the new investor class. Millions of Americans want to build wealth in capital markets, and do not believe they should pay taxes for the privilege. A smart Republican campaign should be able to mobilize them.

Like Kerry, Edwards voted to authorize war in Iraq—and, like Kerry, voted against funds for the post-war mission. That is a hard position to defend, and suggests unseriousness or worse. Like Kerry, Edwards voted for the Patriot Act, and then spent months claiming that its implementation was a threat to civil liberties. Kerry has switched positions, or at least emphases, again. Presumably Edwards will, too. But voters may want a steadier commitment to fighting terrorism.

Bush and Cheney have shown some lassitude this year. They should get their campaign started. The spur of competition might do *them* some good, too.

AT WAR

A Fighting Chance

THE U.S. handed sovereignty over Iraq to a transitional government. The quickie ceremony came two days earlier than expected, after which U.S. administrator Jerry Bremer left the country, prompting critics to call the handover hasty and desperate. But the improvisation was understandable—Bremer wanted to wrong-foot any terror attacks scheduled for the announced handover date of June 30, and it did not hurt to demonstrate our eagerness to surrender formal control of the country. Iraq is still in a perilous state, but the handover brings a few encouraging signs. Prime Minister Allawi seems to be doing well, combining a nice political touch with a genuine desire to crack down on the insurrection. Anti-occupation clerics have recently denounced the terrorist acts of the jihadists, and in Baquba, during one recent battle, civilians asked for arms to fight them. It may, finally, be sinking in for Iraqis that it is the future of their country that is under attack.

Allawi has taken steps toward martial law, which is probably necessary and certainly would be popular. But it's not clear how martial the Iraqis have it in their power to be. The United States is still in a race: We have to build up Iraqi security forces before the insurrection undermines the new government by sowing chaos and making Allawi rely too much on our forces. The administration has undermined its cause by not yet getting enough reconstruction work into the hands of ordinary Iraqis. The country desperately needs a WPA-style program. And we could contribute significantly to Allawi's chances by getting his neighbors to stop threatening Iraq's stability. This will, of course, require a different approach in each case (the Saudis, the Iranians, and the Syrians). But the gun-shy administration hasn't been willing even to look cross-wise at the Syrians, who are reportedly harboring financiers of the insurrection.

Bremer's departure leaves an aching sense of incompleteness. He had hoped Iraq would be in a different and better place by now. It is easy to pick at his—and the administration's—mistakes in retrospect. But under difficult circumstances (more

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difficult than most supporters of the war imagined), he did a fine job. There is no taking away the allies' accomplishment of toppling Saddam and giving Iraq a chance at a fresh start. That chance may yet burgeon into something truly remarkable, a decently governed major Arab country with a dash of pluralism and Western-style freedom. For an illustration, look no further than Saddam in the dock, answering for his crimes in an Iraqi court determined to hew to lawful procedures. Anyone who can't see the wonder in that is either too jaded or too partisan to appreciate what may yet happen in Iraq.

AT WAR II

Trial and Combat

WHEN the Supreme Court handed down three decisions related to terrorism, the early news reports presented them as defeats for the Bush administration. The administration and its defenders then explained that the Court really had affirmed Bush's wartime powers in important respects, and that apparent defeats were not so bad when the details were examined. On the question of how to characterize the Court's handiwork, we find ourselves more inclined to side with the media than with the administration. The glass is at best a quarter full.

In *Hamdi* v. *Rumsfeld*, the Court found that the president's war powers include the ability to detain enemy combatants—hence the claims of a Bush victory. But it also found that Yaser Hamdi, an American citizen captured while fighting in Afghanistan for the enemy, has a right to challenge his detention, the procedures for hearing this challenge being guided by some rules that Justice O'Connor has helpfully constructed for the occasion. It may be possible for the Pentagon to abide by O'Connor's rules (another reason for the administration's optimistic spin). But the Court should not have imposed these rules in the first place, and its willingness to do so sets a bad precedent. Justice Thomas, dissenting alone, rightly found that Hamdi had already enjoyed "all the process to which he was due under the circumstances" when the executive provided courts with evidence regarding his capture. Its decision to detain him was not for the courts to second-guess. The possibility of political opposition is a healthy constraint on executive power; invented legal doctrines are not necessary.

There is no way, meanwhile, to spin *Rasul* v. *Bush* as a victory for the administration, law-constrained judging, or common sense. This decision, from which all three conservatives on the Court dissented, allows foreign enemy combatants, apparently wherever they are being held, to go to federal courts to challenge their detentions. There are 600 such detainees in Guantánamo, all of them now entitled to a hearing, in a venue of their choosing. The Ninth Circuit should prepare for the deluge.

In *Rumsfeld* v. *Padilla*, the Court ruled that the detainee had brought his case in the wrong court. After it is filed in the right one and wends its way upward, how will the Court rule? The other two cases suggest that the enemy combatant in that case will also be accorded new rights.

Unless, that is, Congress acts. The Court made a statutory conclusion in *Rasul*, not a constitutional one. It did not preclude the Congress from acting to make clear that the courts do not have worldwide jurisdiction over the operations of the American military. It should do so, speedily.

POLITICS

Moore and His Friends

MICHAEL MOORE's *Fahrenheit 9/11* is the biggest-selling documentary in movie history. Compared with normal Hollywood fare, that may be like being the best team in Canadian football. But it would be foolish to underestimate the film's potential impact. Moore has created a new form of media, the attack movie, which follows blogs, talk radio, and cable TV among recent arrivals.

Like remoras following a shark, Moore's critics have been cleaning up his errors and distortions. They have a busy task. Moore says the Bush family is enmeshed with the Saudis, having received over a billion dollars of Saudi business. This refers to a Saudi purchase in the mid-'90s from BDM, a defense contractor owned by the Carlyle Group, on one of whose advisory boards George H. W. Bush sat. But the Carlyle Group sold BDM five months before the elder Bush joined its board. Moore says that George W. Bush went to war in Afghanistan to ice a deal for a natural-gas pipeline with Unocal, a Texas company. But Unocal had dropped its pipeline idea in 1998. Moore shows a pre-invasion Iraq of happy children flying kites. Yes, and Germany hosted an exuberant Olympics in 1936 (filmed, come to think of it, by Leni Riefenstahl).

The real response to Moore and the mindset he addresses is not fact-checking, but questioning. If American ties to the Saudi regime have been too close, and they have, what is the remedy? Pulling out American bases (which the Bush administration has now done)? Should there be other pressures? What kind? If it was a failure to have let Osama bin Laden escape in Tora Bora, then should the United States have committed more troops? If we should not have sent any troops at all to Iraq, then what should be our policy toward rogue states with sophisticated armies, who are also sponsors of terror? Mothers bewail the deaths of their sons in battle, as Lila Lipscomb does in *Fahrenheit 9/11*. But so do they in all wars. Is pacifism the answer?

Michael Moore can dismiss or evade these questions, because he considers them unimportant. He wishes only to accomplish his goal, which is to have the United States withdraw from the world (and perhaps hope that the world withdraws from us). But they are also questions for his mainstream well-wishers. Sen. Tom Daschle voted for the Iraq war, but attended the Washington opening of *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and reportedly sucked up to the filmmaker. Former Clinton operatives Chris Lehane and Mark Fabiani are running Moore's "war room," responding to his critics. The chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Terry McAuliffe, told NR's Byron York that he "believes" Moore's pipeline theory about Afghanistan. The sometimes-sensible William Raspberry and the rabid Paul Krugman have written columns admitting Moore's mistakes and irresponsibility, but saying that they are justified in the greater cause of running down Bush. After taking power with such allies and under such auspices, how do liberals propose to govern?

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notes & asides

■ June 29, 2004
Memo to the staff of NATIONAL REVIEW

As you may have read in the *New York Times*, I will tonight step down as chief executive officer of NATIONAL REVIEW, yielding my place to Ed Capano. Rich Lowry will stay on as editor, and Dusty Rhodes will be chairman. I write this note to say how utterly confident I am in the capabilities of my successors, and I know they are grateful to all of you who have labored in our grand little vineyard, chasing down history and making it.

Ever, WFB

National Review Founder Says It's Time to Leave Stage

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

In 1954, when Ronald Reagan was still a registered Democrat and host of "General Electric Theater," the 28-year-old William Frank Buckley Jr. decided to start a magazine as a [illegible] for the fledgling

he intended to keep the secret from them," Mr. Bramwell said as he presented the award. "Thus did he awaken their minds to the possibility that liberalism is not the philosophia ultima but just another item in the baleful catalogue of modern ideologies."

Not everyone shares [illegible]

[The editors of NATIONAL REVIEW will comment on Mr. Buckley's retirement in the next issue, which will also include excerpts from his autobiography, *Miles Gone By*, published July 15.—Rich Lowry]

■ *WFB's introduction of David Brooks, Manhattan Institute luncheon, June 8*

It was too good to be true that David Brooks would be allowed to come and go through public life without vivisection, but then that which is too good to be true doesn't happen, does it? I had the good fortune to meet today's speaker when he came to NATIONAL REVIEW as a young editor, before going off to disport with the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Weekly Standard*. And of course a year ago he was given prime journalistic acreage, a regular column in the *New York Times*.

During these years he has written widely, even coining a term to describe a certain class of Americans, the Bobos. These are bourgeois Bohemians, and recorded as living in Paradise. The reviewer in *USA Today* called this book "a breezy, well-argued explanation for why affluent well-educated people crave Sub-Zero refrigerators." Christopher Buckley called it "an absolute sparkler of a book which should establish David Brooks as the smart, fun-to-read social critic of his generation." That's nice, even if he inherited the title after an act of parricide.

And of course we are here to celebrate the book's sequel, *On Paradise Drive*.

Now, this book has driven some people, apparently normal, quite round the bend, for instance Michael Kinsley—though he isn't, really, normal enough to appreciate David Brooks. Kinsley began his review by remarking that Brooks has been "every liberal's favorite conservative." He explains: "This is not just because he throws us a bone of agreement every now and then. Even the most poisonous propagandist"—Kinsley cites Bill O'Reilly—"knows that trick. Brooks goes farther. In his writing and on television he actually seems reasonable. More than that, he seems cuddly." Kinsley goes on to suggest that of course this is a grave misimpression.

Well, I don't really think it is. I think David Brooks *is* cuddly. Twenty years ago, just graduated, he came to NATIONAL REVIEW to work. Recalling that experience some years later, he wrote that he found the magazine "a convivial ship." It hadn't always been so, he wrote. "In the early days, apparently, NR was like a crowded valley in the Appalachians, with rifle fire from shed to shed." What happened? "We were all so wrapped up in admiration for managing editor Priscilla Buckley," he explained in his essay, "that we weren't in a mood to feud." He was too self-effacing to remark that Priscilla had found him cuddly, while the rest of us spent our time conspiring to prevent him from tossing too many bones to the liberals.

David is of course sharp as a tack, but his good nature is almost always on exhibit, and he knows that political conversation can be hard to do, if you commit the effrontery of presenting a sociological vision of modern America entirely ignoring the coordinates of Marx and Freud. He is aware of the problem. He wrote recently, "I realize it's now practically illegal to have modulated views about anything related to the Bush administration"—but even so, Brooks wrote, he thought the economists who gave Bush passing grades were justified in doing so.

Indeed, a year ago he got right off that fence astride which conservatives seeking to be tolerated sit. He wrote: "Have the Democrats totally flipped their lids?" He quotes Senator Robert Byrd: "This republic is at its greatest danger in its history because of this administration." And David quoted Bill Moyers on the Bush agenda: "I think this is deliberate, intentional destruction of the United States of America." Bill Moyers must have meant to say, "as much destruction of the United States of America as hadn't already been done by Ronald Reagan," at whose funeral on Friday world leaders will gather to mourn the loss of the American president who discovered supply-side economics.

But America destroyed isn't David Brooks's America, which he describes in his readable new book as having its problems—what else does one expect? We are a problem-solving nation, so in order to exercise our national skills, we have to begin by having problems. But David Brooks loves his country, looks its quiddities in the face, and writes with amusement and some serenity about the nearest thing there is to paradise on this planet, in a quite cuddly way, and this brings distress to much of the critical community. He has done much to reciprocate what his country has done for him, and his friends, I have reason to know, are always in his debt.

—WFB

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Taboo

Abu Ghraib images are one thing. But 9/11? Off limits.

BYRON YORK

On Saturday, September 15, 2001, just four days after the terrorist attacks, ABC News anchorman Peter Jennings hosted a special program entitled "Answering Kids' Questions." Exploring the effect of the attacks on children, Jennings and a Yale psychiatrist discussed whether young people should see the much-played video of airliners crashing into the World Trade Center. The answer was no. "I mean, some of us have kids, too," Jennings said. "And we remember from the past that if you run these images over and over and over again, it is tough."

That was the beginning of a new policy at ABC News: No more use of the planes-into-towers video. "We actually talked to a number of psychologists, who told us that kids seeing this over and over were unable to distinguish that this was something that was [not] happening again and again and again," says ABC News vice president Jeffrey Schneider. Because of that possible effect on children, Schneider continues, the network decided to use only still pictures to tell the September 11 story.

ABC is not alone. Indeed, across the network- and cable-news spectrum, there is a virtual blackout of the video of the actual terrorist attacks of 9/11. Network executives say they have made the decision on the basis of taste, or respect for those killed, or concern for children, or other reasons, but the end result is that at a time when there is a continuing and passionate debate about the direction of the War on Terror, there is little, if any, graphic representation of what started that war in the first place.

At NBC News, vice president Allison Gollust says the network "rarely permits" use of the video. Gollust says that, after an extensive internal discussion, "we chose to limit usage of these images because they are very disturbing and we feel that it isn't necessary to have people watching be disturbed over and over again. . . . We are cognizant of a need to be sensitive to this type of video and its usage, and signal that sensitivity to our viewers." At CBS News, a spokeswoman says the network leaves the decision up to the executive producers of individual programs, but there is a widespread understanding that the video can be used "only when it is really necessary."

At CNN, the policy is to allow use of the video of the terrorist planes in flight but to "stop short of the moment of impact," according to spokesman Matt Furman. "It's simply a matter of having regard for the sensitivities of our audience." At MSNBC, a spokesman says, "We are very, very, very careful about using those images. Use of the video would require the approval of a senior executive." And at Fox, the policy is much the same. "We don't use it indiscriminately," says Kevin Magee, vice president of news programming. Magee says Fox decided to limit use of the footage within days of September 11, and now, any reporter who wants to use the video in a taped report has to ask Fox's top news executive, John Moody, for permission.

Put it all together, and that means the moving pictures of the September 11 attacks—surely the most powerful of the television age—have virtually disappeared from American life. "My staff cannot recall seeing it in any network newscast at any time in the past two years," says Brent Baker of the Media Research Center, where workers are paid to watch television news all day. "That doesn't mean it didn't ever air, but it has been very rare."

In some ways, it's reasonable that the networks would place limits on the use of the video. Any time television news, especially in its 24-hour cable form, has memorable pictures, it tends to overuse them. Video might be used for the "bumpers" that end program segments, it might be dressed up with "America at War"-style graphics, it might even be set to music. Given the gravity and importance of the World Trade Center video, cheapening the pictures in the standard TV-news fashion would be unwise.

But now, television-news executives seem to have gone too far in the other direction. Baker wonders whether some viewers "have lost a sense of the horror of that day" because they no longer see pictures of it. And Tom Rosenstiel, the former *Los Angeles Times* media critic who now heads the Project for Excellence in Journalism, says, "I think it's possible that a well-intended policy that is designed to be thoughtful and sensitive to the feelings of family members or children can have the unintended consequence, two years later, of causing us to forget how we felt." Rosenstiel adds that he believes the policy might, in the end, be entirely warranted, but says, "I think the question of, has enough time passed that they should reevaluate those policies, is probably a good question to ask."

Although it started with television

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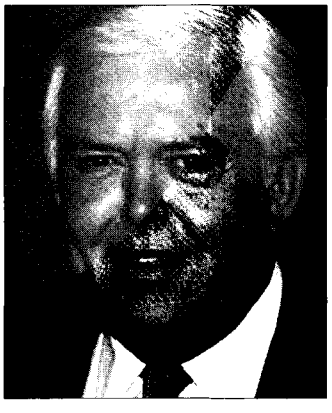
newscasts, the don't-show-the-planes approach has now become the accepted style of portraying the events of September 11—for everyone. For example, when Michael Moore's new anti-Bush tirade *Fahrenheit 9/11* reaches the moment of the attacks, the screen goes completely black. For several seconds, audiences hear the sound of a roaring plane hitting the World Trade Center, and then another, and then screams and crying and the collapse of the twin towers—all with nothing but black onscreen.

Some critics loved it: The *Washington Post* called the scene "one of the most moving sequences in recent cinema" and Moore's "finest artistic moment." But leaving out the video was about more than art. In the film, Moore argues that the United States invaded Afghanistan not to avenge the attacks of September 11, and not to begin a global War on Terror, but to make it possible for the Unocal Corporation to build a natural-gas pipeline across Afghanistan for the financial benefit of Vice President Dick Cheney. Even for a filmmaker of Moore's brazenness, it would have been difficult to make that argument—which even some of his supporters have conceded has no basis in fact—if the narrative were running over video of 757s crashing into the World Trade Center, doomed Americans standing in windows gasping for air, and some of the victims jumping to their deaths, rather than face a fiery end.

And that is ultimately why the question of the September 11 video is important. It is far easier to argue that the War on Terror is about oil, or empire, or Halliburton, when you simply don't show what it is really about: the attacks of September 11. Americans won't forget that day. But as it recedes in time, they may lose the visceral feeling they experienced as terrorists struck at the centers of American power and killed 3,000 people. Showing that horrifying video would remind people of just how they felt—and of why the War on Terror goes on. **NR**

things we like



When President Bush announced his illegal-immigrant amnesty plan in January, the media were abuzz—and rightly so. It's their relative silence on immigration the rest of the time that bothers Lou Dobbs—who, with his regular "Broken Borders" segment on CNN's *Lou Dobbs Tonight*, does more than his part to compensate.

Dobbs's continuing immigration "beat" is something rare among print publications, and practically nonexistent in broadcast journalism. Dobbs began looking at immigration as a post-9/11 homeland-security matter, but found that "ancillary issues, like the economic and social impact, were not debated. There has been a critical failure on the part of policymakers in this area."

Dobbs and his correspondents report a few times weekly on a wide range of issues affected by immigration, from overcrowding in schools to the plight of ranch owners living near the Mexican border. They untangle the complex web of U.S. immigration policy to provide real answers and to educate America's public (and its leaders).

This work sets Dobbs apart, and earned him this year's Eugene Katz Award for Excellence in the Coverage of Immigration (from the Center for Immigration Studies). While most broadcast coverage of immigration relies heavily on human-interest sob stories, Dobbs looks past this low-hanging fruit to pursue the facts—talking to all sides, and looking at all angles.

This has exposed Dobbs to some harsh—if irrational—criticism: "When we started to talk about illegal immigration . . . we had hundreds, maybe thousands [of e-mails]—basically accusing me of being a racist." This may be part of why so few journalists take immigration seriously. But Dobbs also blames a media "orthodoxy" that "constrains the rigorous examination of issues. We try very hard every day to break through that, and border security is a very important issue to do it on."

—MEGHAN CLYNE

NANCY KASZERMAN

Screwball

Chris Matthews gets a bad case of neoconitis

JIM GERAGHTY

You hate to see a great talk-show host go bad. Few political hosts combine the raw love of politics, evenhanded skepticism, impatience with canned answers, and sheer capacity for spoken-words-per-minute of Chris Matthews. He can be a delight. However, viewers are getting something extra with their *Hardball* these days: bizarre flights of fancy.

Matthews, a Carter speechwriter and chief of staff to Tip O'Neill, is far from a down-the-line lefty (see, for instance, his charming piece on Ronald Reagan in NR's June 28 issue). He ripped Clinton during impeachment, mocked Al Gore's campaigning style, and praised George W. Bush's post-9/11 leadership. But in the last two years, Matthews has theorized more and more about a sinister "neoconservative" cabal pulling the strings of Bush. While there's little doubt that conservatives, neo and otherwise, have a strong voice in Oval Office discussions, the *Hardball* host tends to see the fingerprints of the shadowy neocons near every administration decision and misstep.

Take the Abu Ghraib photos. For days, Matthews hammered guests about where the chain and dog collar in the infamous picture possibly could have originated. On May 26, he interviewed Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, who commanded the Iraqi prison system at the time of the abuses. "So who was it at the top of the chain who gave these guys and these women, people like Lynndie England, the leash and the dog collar she used in that picture?" Matthews barked. "Who gave it to her?" Matthews seemed to believe that top Pentagon officials, eager to promote the humiliation of prisoners, sent dog collars special delivery to Abu

Mr. Geraghty is author of the daily "Kerry Spot" on National Review Online.

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Ghraib. The more humdrum explanation is that leashes and dog collars might have been kept somewhere near . . . the prison's guard dogs.

Dog collars are the least of it. Matthews detects a secret plan of military domination that would shame Alexander the Great. "What I fear is the neoconservatives," Matthews told an audience at Brown University in October 2003. "They want to fight the North Koreans again. Iran. Iraq. Syria. Libya." Before long, "they'll go after China." Almost anything that happens in the administration is the work of neocons. Tenet resigns? Matthews has an explanation: "The long knives from the war hawks have been [out] for Tenet for days since the raid on Ahmad Chalabi headquarters . . . The winners, [Douglas] Feith, [Paul] Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, Scooter [Libby], and all those guys. Don't you think they're sending back a whiff of white smoke, saying, 'We won'?"

Watching respectable guests get dragged into the conspiracy-theorizing can be inadvertently hilarious. Here is Matthews discussing the fallout of Tenet's "It's a slam dunk" comment with Howard Fineman of *Newsweek* and Tucker Carlson of CNN.

MATTHEWS: You know, I think if there's a Nobel Peace Prize you can win, there ought to be a non-peace prize you get for doing something really bad. Someone here in the intelligence community, someone leading up to the president's offices committed a colossal blunder.

CARLSON: That's right.

MATTHEWS: And it's hard to believe it was an accident. It's just hard to believe that.

CARLSON: I—I don't know about that. I will say I disagree . . .

MATTHEWS: I mean, completely imagine a weapons system that was going to threaten our country? . . .

FINEMAN: Which makes me wonder what George Tenet knows . . .

CARLSON: Exactly.

FINEMAN: . . . about what the White House did with various pieces of intelligence that could blow the White House out of the water politically. If they don't dare fire Tenet, who should be fired . . .

CARLSON: Yes.

FINEMAN: . . . if the scenario we now hear is true, if they don't fire him, then that means that there are things that the CIA knows about the White House operation that are incredibly damaging.

Matthews appears to buy into the Michael-Moore-esque line that Bush is a figurehead, an irrelevant president-in-name-only. Cheney was "behind it all," Matthews said at Brown. "The whole neo-conservative power vortex, it all goes through his office. . . . He has become the chief executive. He's not the chief operating officer, he's running the place. It's scary. The ideologues started circling around the president. They saw a man who never read any books, who didn't think too deeply and they gave him something to think about for the first time in his life. This thing called preemption, the Bush Doctrine. They put it in his head and said 'Iraq, Iraq, Iraq.'"

Matthews appears to buy into the Michael-Moore-esque line that Bush is a figurehead, an irrelevant president-in-name-only.

Cheney's dark powers know no bounds. "The vice president is—can be charming, too, but he's very dark," he said on April 21. "Very suspicious. He's always cautious. That dark view seems to be very consistent with the view of the ideologues who pushed the war . . . I find him to be a Machiavellian genius, a man who could suggest things in the right way so somebody else would do them."

Earlier, he had asserted that fear of Cheney was rampant in the cabinet: "When I read these accounts and having read them and observed them for all these months since 9/11, it looks to me like the secretary of state, Colin Powell, a man of enormous worldwide respect, George Tenet, a man who is practically a family friend of the Bush family, father and son, were afraid of Richard Cheney."

Or of his chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

MATTHEWS: Scooter Libby. Why would somebody have that much power over cabinet officials?

worse than watergate

The press hated Richard Nixon—but he gave them a lot to work with. Today, there is a Watergate-like press feeding frenzy, and it is against the entire presidency of George W. Bush. The present media environment may even be worse than Watergate—as former Nixon hands can attest.

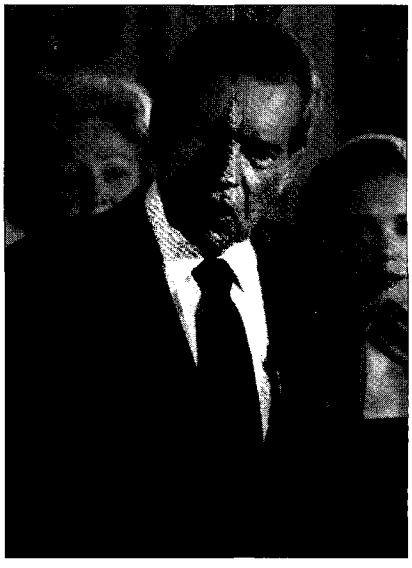
Chuck Colson says, "I think the attack on Bush has been if anything more vicious. We started out with the press disliking Nixon and Nixon disliking the press. We inherited a very unpopular war. The attacks on Nixon were more understandable." He adds, "It does seem to me now worse than it was then, because it's so unprovoked."

According to Ray Price, "the intensity of the media hostility to George W. Bush, as compared with that toward Richard Nixon, is all the more remarkable considering that Richard Nixon, when he took office, had long been the figure the Left loved most to hate—going back to his being the one to nail Alger Hiss."

And Len Garment says, "In a sense, it's even worse now than in Nixon's time." But "the abuse is so excessive it resonates only among the not-inconsiderable audience of people who like to hear that sort of thing."

That would seem like good news. Then again, that audience is "not inconsiderable," indeed.

—STEPHEN SPRUIELL



WALLY MCNAMEE/CORBIS

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BRYAN BURROUGH, SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT FOR *VANITY FAIR*: Why would they have that much power?
MATTHEWS: Right.
BURROUGH: I think it was just—it was intellectual give-and-take. And this one, there was a little give and a little take.
MATTHEWS: I think all of the give was from Scooter and all the take was from the cabinet.

In Matthews's televised questions, monologues, and comments, Israel crops up again and again as a suspiciously influential force. "The Democrats are scared to death," he has said. "And it's not just they're scared of being called wusses. That's not that simple. They've got conservative people out there, some of them Jewish, who are very tough on foreign policy. They believe we should fight the Arabs and take them down. They believe that if we don't fight Iraq, Israel will be in danger." Also, "we're scared to death of Sharon," who is "dictating to the president sometimes. I think he's writing his speeches sometimes." The likes of Natan Sharansky are "in bed with the vice president's office and the Defense Department." Etc.

Jed Babbin, deputy undersecretary of defense in the first Bush administration and a frequent Matthews guest, attributes Matthews's sometimes fanciful statements to an urge to create drama. "I don't think Matthews thinks that Donald Rumsfeld is dreaming about whipping Iraqi prisoners himself," Babbin said. "He is a showman, and he likes to say things that will provoke people. He wants to be controversial, and he sometimes succeeds in being controversial."

Controversy is one thing. Bizarre obsession is another. There's nothing wrong with challenging the contentions of an administration, but Matthews has at times appeared to suffer from a kind of monomania. On the occasion of *Hardball's* seventh anniversary, radio host Don Imus remarked, "Congratulations, Chris. You've demonstrated that, yes, a viable television career can be constructed entirely on repetition of just two phrases, 'neocon, neocon,' and 'Scooter Libby, Scooter Libby.'"

Come back to us, Chris. **NR**

The Opinion Journalism of Dana Milbank

Otherwise, the *Washington Post*'s White House correspondent

JOHN J. MILLER

On April 17, two days before the official publication of Bob Woodward's *Plan of Attack*, Dana Milbank of the *Washington Post* appeared on the *Today* show to discuss the book's political impact. White House officials "have good reason to be worried," said Milbank. "I think we finally found the weapon of mass destruction here." He continued: "The administration will have a much tougher time knocking down Bob Woodward than they have had in dealing with some of their other critics."

Yet the Bush team hasn't tried to knock down Woodward—it's been too busy pumping him up. On the president's reelection website, there's a "suggested reading list." *Plan of Attack* sits at the top. There's even a link to Amazon.com, for purchasing convenience. The GOP has been called "the stupid party" before, but encouraging people to buy a book like the one Milbank described would be about as smart as screening Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* at a Bush-Cheney fundraiser.

To be sure, *Plan of Attack* is no reverential tribute to Bush's presidential leadership. John Kerry's campaign has tried to exploit several of its details. By embracing the book, GOP strategists perhaps intended to smother some of its criticisms. But *Plan of Attack* is certainly not the full-frontal offensive of Milbank's telling. "I don't know whether [Bush has] read it," said Woodward in a CNN interview. "Somebody who has talked to him said he's looked at the book, and he's happy with it."

Bush's top staff, however, is definitely not happy with Milbank. He holds one of the premier jobs in political journalism—White House correspondent for the *Washington Post*—yet he approaches his beat with anything but balance, as his attempt to shape public perceptions of the Woodward book demonstrates. The bias comes as no surprise, given his profession. In a recent Pew Research Center survey of national journalists (such as Milbank), 34 percent labeled themselves "liberal" and only 7 percent labeled themselves "conservative." (Most say they are "moderate"—which is how Dan Rather describes the *New York Times*.) Even in this crowd of semi-closeted Democrats, however, Milbank stands out as probably the most anti-Bush reporter currently assigned to the White House by a major news organization.

Milbank arrived at the *Post* four years ago, having worked previously at the liberal *New Republic*. Before that, he held junior positions at the *Wall Street Journal* and attended Yale, where he was a leading member of the left-wing Progressive party. He's always had trouble hiding his views. "There was a lot of attitude in his copy" when he began covering the White House, said the *Post*'s national political editor Maralee Schwartz in the *New Yorker* earlier this year. She added that his stories had to be "detoxed" before they could appear in print.

Milbank doesn't report outright fabrications or reams of background quotes that can't be verified. He usually gets his facts right, which isn't to say he gets them straight. The main problem with his articles is one of tone. Milbank will write a juicy lead paragraph that disapproves of Bush and then bury all the mitigating details deep within his story. The first sentence of Milbank's article on June 18, for instance, declared Bush to be "at odds" with the 9/11 commission over the relationship between Saddam's Iraq and al-Qaeda. It wasn't until the seventh paragraph that Milbank admitted that the commission "agrees with the administration on key points."

Other times, Milbank simply unloads on the president. On Memorial Day, he and co-author Jim VandeHei described "the ferocious Bush assault on Kerry this spring," which they deemed "unprecedented" and remarkable "both for the volume of attacks and for the liberties the president and his campaign

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have taken with the facts."

Don't forget, these words were written by *news* reporters.

They were also wrong, or at least highly misleading. The Bush campaign was so irritated by the article that it issued a 16-page memo rebutting its various claims.

Milbank and his colleague, for instance, undercounted the total number of negative ads Kerry had run by more than 50 percent because they started their count on March 4, when Bush began his ad campaign (Kerry had started to run his ads long before). They also failed to acknowledge that when negative ads financed by independent groups are included in the mix, the president had been a target far more often than he had been a perpetrator.

That wasn't the only misfire. They also pointed to a Bush ad charging Kerry with intending to "repeal" key parts of the Patriot Act. "Kerry has proposed modifying those provisions," they claimed, "but not repealing them." They went on to chide Bush campaign manager Ken Mehlman for offering "no direct evidence" to support the ad's allegation.

But how's this for direct evidence? "It is time to end the era of John Ashcroft. That starts with replacing the Patriot Act with a new law." That's what Kerry said at Iowa State University in December—as Mehlman pointed out to reporters in a conference call nearly a week before the Milbank-VandeHei story appeared.

Curiously, Milbank used to think that negativity in politics was downright positive. At least that was the central premise of *Smashmouth*, his campaign-trail book on the 2000 presidential race. "There's reason to believe that tough, negative campaigning helps strengthen our leaders, boost creativity in policymaking, and bring reform to government," he wrote. "There's nothing wrong with candidates going negative—but it's a bit rich for the press to dwell on the negative and then scold the candidates for doing the same."

Yes, a bit rich—especially for a reporter who has gone relentlessly negative on Bush. It's not a new problem, either. Since at least 2002, when Milbank wrote a front-page article headlined "For Bush, Facts are Malleable," the claim that Bush is a liar has been a theme in his reporting. In one of his stories on the 9/11 commission, Milbank practically begged Kerry to use its findings to "raise doubts about Bush's credibility."

Dick Cheney often discovers himself in Milbank's crosshairs as well. When the vice president cursed at Democratic senator Pat Leahy, Milbank (with Helen Dewar) filed a whole news story, which included the sanctimonious observation that Bush had promised to "change the tone in Washington." Comparatively little space was given to the substance of what prompted Cheney's remark: Leahy's overheated criticism of the vice president's ties to his former company, Halliburton. Moreover, when Kerry used the same expletive in a *Rolling Stone* interview late last year, neither Milbank nor the other members of the *Post*'s propriety police considered it newsworthy.

Milbank, in fact, seems to have accepted Leahy's contentions about Cheney long ago. For a 2002 story on Cheney's sale of Halliburton stock, Milbank suggested that the vice president had shown "shrewdness" in selling his shares before their price dropped. The implication was that Cheney had fattened his bank account on the basis of inside information—i.e., "... he sold his shares in August 2000 knowing the company was likely headed for a fall."

But perhaps he was just following the advice of editorialists at Milbank's own newspaper, which had urged Cheney to sever all ties to Halliburton when he became Bush's running mate. Milbank breezed right past this inconvenient detail and simply noted that "conflict of interest laws did not require the sale"—as if he would have defended a decision by Cheney to cling to his investments.

Milbank gets one thing right when it

things we like

With their pyrotechnics, Fox News stalwarts Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity may garner more attention, but Brit Hume's nightly show, *Special Report*, is a must-watch for political junkies, professional and amateur. Other news shows are spliced with short news items, combative banter, and flashy graphics. Hume takes a sober and analytical approach, and still stacks up viewers. In the second quarter of 2004, *Special Report* ranked #5 for all news programs on cable.

The show is roughly equal parts reporting, in-depth analysis, and punditry. "Campaign Carl," aka Carl Cameron, provides dispatches from the trail that are respected by both sides. Hume usually has a lengthy interview with an expert on a big issue of the day. He belongs to that minority of interviewers who think that an interview should be about answers, not canned or loaded questions. Finally, Fred Barnes of *The Weekly Standard* and Mort Kondracke of *Roll Call* anchor an end-of-show pundit roundtable that is civil and well informed.

In February, the National Press Foundation unanimously voted Hume their "Broadcaster of the Year." *Slate* founder Michael Kinsley has said: "The TV news anchor I find myself watching most is Brit Hume of Fox News. He brims with bias, and it's a bias I don't share. But his freedom to be biased is also freedom to be intelligent." As for that "bias," Hume's show stands out against the backdrop of other news programs, but according to a recent study by UCLA and University of Chicago academics, *Special Report* is closer to the center than network news broadcasts.

Hume covered the White House for ABC before joining Fox. It can make you wistful: If the world were a better place, Brit Hume would be a high-profile news anchor to whom America turned for serious consideration of the day's events. Wait a minute—thanks to Fox News, he is.

—MEGHAN KEANE

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comes to officials in the Bush administration. "They don't particularly like me," he said on CNN in January. He has turned this observation into a complaint: "I feel like it is a great achievement when at the end of the day I've gotten the communications director or the press secretary on the telephone." Yet he also seems to take strange pleasure in his unpopularity. "Nobody's ever told me what my nickname is with the president," he has said, "but we suspect it can't be repeated in polite company."

The White House critique of Milbank is not that he's tough, but that he's unfair. And is it any wonder? Milbank has described covering the Bush administration as "daily hand-to-hand combat." The purpose of the fighting, it would seem, is to make the president look like a fool. Here's what Milbank said on CNN in April, regarding Bush's nationally televised press conference: "They gave us more than 24 hours notice this time, which means all of the reporters had plenty of time to think up a 'stump-the-president' type of question that he might not be expecting."

And this guy is shocked that people who work for the president don't always return his phone calls in a jiffy? In Milbank's mind, the fault lies entirely with an incommunicative White House. When the Russian government released a statement earlier this year describing a phone conversation between Bush and Vladimir Putin—and the Bush administration didn't—Milbank went thermonuclear on the pages of the *Post*: "It may come as a surprise to some that the Kremlin, symbol of secrecy and repression, has become more transparent than the White House, symbol of freedom and democracy. But such experience has become routine."

The Bush White House is certainly guarded when it comes to relations with the press—there aren't nearly as many leaks as there were during the Clinton years and its spokesmen don't go out of their way to nurture relationships with their favorite journalists. But the Kremlin? These are the reckless words of a man so frustrated by the president he has become unhinged. What Milbank needs, it would seem, is an extended tour of duty outside the fever swamps of Washington's Beltway—perhaps in Moscow, or at least somewhere far from the president he clearly despises. **NR**

Worse than Tom and Dan?

Peter, we mean

RACHEL ZABARKES FRIEDMAN

"My mother . . . was pretty anti-American. And so I was, in some respects, raised with anti-Americanism in my blood, or in my mother's milk at least."

That's Canadian-born reporter Peter Jennings, appearing on Letterman, in September 2002. Jennings—who's been the sole anchor on ABC's *World News Tonight* since 1983—became a dual U.S. citizen just last year. As anchor, Jennings is elegant, urbane, and a touch condescending: He speaks slowly, like a teacher to his pupils, nodding seriously and often. But for all Jennings's apparent desire to educate viewers, some media-watchers consider him the worst—the most ideologically liberal and consistently biased—of the network news anchors. And given that he attracts, on average, between 8 and 9 million viewers each night, that charge isn't something to take lightly.

Studies of Iraq-war coverage by the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that *World News Tonight* had "the most anti-war coverage" of the nightly newscasts on the three major networks in both 1991 and 2003. The 2003 study found that Jennings's show aired the most criticism of the Bush administration and featured the most opposition to the war. (For example, Jennings found plenty of time for anti-war rallies, but said not a word about a pro-troops rally in New York City that drew 15,000 people.) Even before the release of the study, Jennings said: "We have been criticized . . . by people who think I was not enough pro-war. That is simply not the way I think of this role. This role is designed to question the behavior of government officials on behalf of the public."

And question he has, at least when it comes to the Bush administration. Like many others, Jennings pounced on the 9/11 commission report on Iraq–al-Qaeda ties as an opportunity to question Bush's reasons for going to war. Introducing an otherwise fair June 16 segment, he said, "One of the Bush administration's most controversial assertions in its argument for war in Iraq was that Saddam Hussein had links to al-Qaeda. Today, the 9/11 commission said unequivocally, not so."

But the commission did not say "unequivocally, not so": It *did* describe possible links between Iraq and al-Qaeda, though it didn't find conclusive evidence of Iraqi involvement in the September 11 attacks. But that qualification clearly would have taken the wind out of Jennings's "Bush lied" sails.

Jennings's professed skepticism of government stops where his socialist leanings begin: He's repeatedly praised European social-welfare policies (compared with America the Greedy) and described tax cuts as money sucked from government programs. In 1994, when voters elected a Republican majority in both houses of Congress—expressing their own skepticism of government—Jennings retorted on his daily ABC radio commentary: "Imagine a nation full of uncontrolled two-year-old rage. The voters had a temper tantrum last week. . . . 'Parenting' and 'governing' don't have to be dirty words."

Jennings has also been known to put in a plug or two for Communist regimes. Take a 1989 report about Cuba: "Medical care was once for the privileged few. Today it is available to every Cuban and it is free. Some of Cuba's health care is world class. . . . Health and education are the Revolution's greatest success stories." Jennings then quoted a Cuban saying, "They are the most important, the two most important things that a people can expect from a government, and we have the both of them." (Popular though Castroite propaganda may be, quality of life in Cuba has hardly been something to celebrate since 1959, as Mark Falcoff, for instance, shows in his recent *Cuba: The Morning After*.)

And then there's the Middle East. Jennings—who dated former Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi when she was a graduate student in Lebanon—has a reputation for anti-Israel bias that goes

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back at least to the 1972 Munich Olympics. It is remembered that he refused to use the word "terrorists," and called the killers "guerrillas" or "commandos" instead.

Alex Safian, associate director of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), calls Jennings "by far the most anti-Israel of the major network anchors and reporters" and "the most apologetic when it comes to Palestinian terrorism." Consider as an example—just one of many—Jennings's 2000 introduction to a story about the killing of two Israeli reservists who had made a wrong turn and ended up in Ramallah:

> It has been another terrible day of fighting between Israelis and Palestinians. There was a particularly ugly incident in the Palestinian city of Ramallah. Forty-thousand people live there. This week they're all angry at the Israelis. There was about to be another funeral. . . . At least two Israeli army reservists were clearly in the wrong place. They were stopped and taken into a police station. That was not enough for their protection.

Jennings said not a word about the Israeli victims, or the fact that their brutalized bodies were put on public display. His implicit message: "Don't forget, *Palestinians* are the victims here." (The following report, by another journalist, did broadcast images of the scene, but described the event in only a few sentences before declaring, "There was little doubt that Israel would retaliate.")

The late journalist (and pianist) David Bar-Illan once wrote that "in turning a massacre of Israelis into pro-Palestinian propaganda, no one is a greater virtuoso than . . . Peter Jennings."

ABC's Paul Slavin, senior vice president of worldwide newsgathering and former executive producer of *World News Tonight*, says, "Peter has very strongly held personal opinions," but he's "good at recognizing when those opinions are seeping into his reporting." Slavin insists Jennings is "fiercely objective."

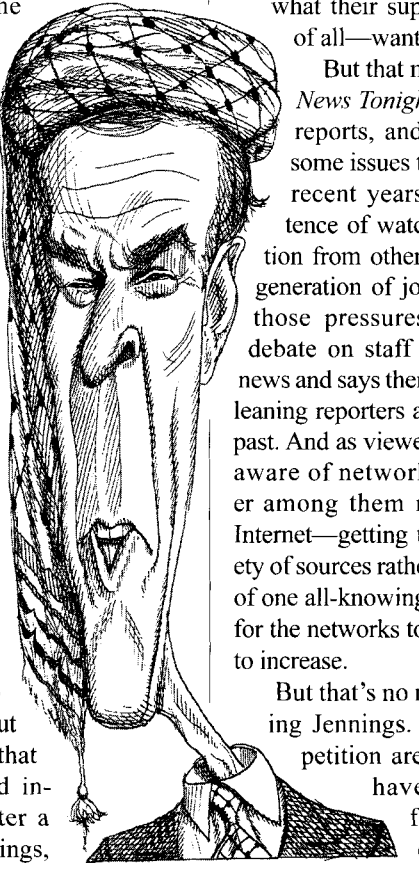
Of course, it's difficult to *prove* bias. Studies rely on criteria some will find subjective. Isolated statements aren't enough to make a home-run case; the key lies in patterns that emerge over time, including which stories are chosen and which are rejected, and how certain topics are repeatedly presented.

The pattern that emerges from the dogged work of a CAMERA or a Media Research Center—both of which have followed Jennings closely for some time, and from which most of the examples in this piece are drawn—suggests he isn't as good at filtering out his own opinions as he thinks, or suggests. So do the testimonies of some former ABC reporters who have spoken out about Jennings's bias.

Robert Zelnick, head of Boston University's journalism department, covered Moscow, Israel, and the Pentagon for *World News Tonight* for twelve years. He says, "There was always the 'Peter factor' to deal with" in filing a news story for Jennings.

Zelnick recounts one instance from his time in Tel Aviv, when an Israeli tank fired at and hit an unauthorized vehicle carrying two CBS crew members on its way to a blockaded Lebanese village; both crewmen were killed. News executives immediately condemned what they claimed was the Israelis' deliberate killing of the newsmen. But Zelnick wasn't convinced. Seeing the site, he says, "it was clear to me that the Israelis might have acted arbitrarily, and cruelly, but there was no proof that they acted intentionally to kill a Western newsman."

So he filed a report to *World News Tonight* that stopped short of accusing the Israelis of intentionally killing the crewmen. He soon heard back from Jennings and a producer saying he should take into account the executives' allegations. Zelnick rewrote the piece to address those claims, but declined to conclude that the Israelis had killed intentionally. When, after a second call from Jennings, Zelnick still refused to make the claim himself, the piece was dropped for that night. It ran only the following evening, after articles in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* had come out corroborating Zelnick's take on the story.



ROMAN GENN

Another former ABC reporter says, "Scripts I wrote were often subject to pressure." In a report on the anniversary of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, Jennings asked the reporter to add more positive statements about the Sandinistas' accomplishments. "Well," the reporter says, "there weren't any." Eventually a positive statement was inserted, but the words Communist and Marxist were not: "I was only able to get the word Communist into my copy a few times," he recalls. ABC responded to the reporter's claims by questioning the quality of his journalism.

Zelnick says that in his experience, when a reporter held his ground about a story, Jennings would relent. "I found him to be an excellent newsman and to have great integrity," Zelnick says. But he also explains, "The anchorman is a very powerful figure at ABC and other networks." Even if not confronted directly, many junior reporters may feel pressure to report what their superiors—Jennings most of all—want to hear.

But that may be changing. *World News Tonight* does air even-handed reports, and it is possible that on some issues the slant has lessened in recent years—thanks to the existence of watchdog groups, competition from other media, and a younger generation of journalists responding to those pressures. Slavin admits that debate on staff helps make for better news and says there are more Republican-leaning reporters at ABC now than in the past. And as viewers become increasingly aware of network bias and the younger among them move to cable or the Internet—getting their news from a variety of sources rather than through the filter of one all-knowing anchor—the incentive for the networks to straighten out is likely to increase.

But that's no reason to stop monitoring Jennings. Knowledge and competition are the best weapons we have against the "Peter factor" and other such distortions. **NR**

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A Week in the Life . . .

. . . of the Big Bad Nets

TIM GRAHAM

On the subject of media fairness, people who aren't remote-tossing conservatives often ask, "What do you mean, liberal bias?"

In a nutshell, bias is all about selective storytelling. Which stories do you tell, and which do you bury in a drawer somewhere? As a story is assembled, whom do you build up as the hero, and whom do you paint as the villain—and how do you describe them? Do you tell a story to inspire, or to amuse? To inform, or to scare? As a program is assembled, in what order do you put the stories? Which are novels of epic proportions, and which are the length of a classified ad?

At the top TV-news outlets, these decisions are shaped daily by a crusading liberal impulse, whereby journalists think that pursuing objectivity and balance on controversial issues is a cowardly means of evading tough choices: between justice and injustice, or between the good guys and the bad guys. A look at a typical week's programming—seeing how the nightly news unfolded for ABC, CBS, and NBC viewers—will make clear how the bias works.

Monday, June 21. The Supreme Court decides 9-0 that HMOs cannot be sued in state courts, and network coverage follows a predictable story line. All three networks feature good-guy plaintiffs with sad stories of malpractice or lost loved ones owing to bad-guy HMO accountants. Each includes a soundbite from HMO industry spokeswoman Karen Ignagni. But ABC and NBC describe her opponents from liberal groups like the AARP and Families USA favorably—and without identifying the groups' ideological leanings—as merely "patients'-rights advocates." Neither story notes that these groups were major backers of the Clintons' health plan in 1993, which would have put most of America's patients in these dastardly managed-care programs.

Dan Rather follows up on his interview of Bill Clinton with previously unseen footage of Clinton defending his foreign-policy record. Dan sits calmly and listens as the former president talks about his bold dealings with North Korea, which Clinton weirdly calls "the last great Communist outpost." CBS will compound the weirdness on Wednesday with a report on how the Bush administration has "finally put a deal on the table" for an arms agreement with North Korea—making no mention of the fact that North Korea blatantly violated the last such agreement.

Tuesday, June 22. The big story is that a federal judge has allowed a whopping class-action sex-discrimination suit against Wal-Mart. It looks a little like a repeat from Monday night, with female HMO victims replaced by female CEO victims. CBS has no Wal-Mart spokesman, just upset female employees and attorneys. NBC at least features a Wal-Mart voice while noting, "Wal-Mart is already reeling from accusations of employing illegal immigrants and shaving hours off time cards." ABC includes Wal-Mart's CEO, and highlights immediate pressure to settle: "Lawyers for the women workers told ABC News that if they win the case at trial, a jury award could approach a billion dollars, but money isn't everything." The networks express no concern that Wal-Mart's litigation problems might result in layoffs or higher prices.

Tom Brokaw promises: "Coming up later on *NBC Nightly News*: Former President Clinton kicks off his book tour in a frenzy that would make Elvis proud." Andrea Mitchell's story is soft-soap: "From coast to coast . . . the selling of Bill Clinton. His fans have been lining up since noon yesterday . . . midnight in Washington. . . . Dawn in New York, rain or shine . . . it is the Bill Clinton book club." At least she mentions that Clinton had a $10 million advance to try to earn back for his publisher. CBS's Jim Axelrod does a story lamenting that the book's buzz carries too much focus on Monicagate. Unasked question: Whose decision was that?

Wednesday, June 23. The big-impact story tonight on all three networks is an anonymous CIA officer we're told has been one of our government's top Osama bin Laden trackers. Shadowed in black, he sounds amazingly like John Kerry, saying that we are losing the War on Terror because we waged an unnecessary war in Iraq that only delighted Osama. He also sees nothing but disaster in Afghanistan. He makes grand and scary predictions that al-Qaeda is still capable of plotting an attack on American soil even more lethal than 9/11. He has an "anonymous" book coming out in three weeks titled *Imperial Hubris*. We never learn anything about this man, or his possible personal or political affiliations.

Is this fair? Haven't the networks already promoted a parade of anti-Bush books this year—Paul O'Neill, Richard Clarke, Joe Wilson? (Wait, correction: Wilson's book was crowded out by Abu Ghraib.) Here's one way to think about it: If this CIA officer had written an anonymous book in the Clinton era with the message that President Clinton's anti-terrorism policy was poor and could lead to a lethal attack on American soil, would he have received major publicity on the national TV news without any knowledge of his personal background? Answer: Try to find an author of a *non-anonymous* book questioning Clinton's defense policies who was a sensation on all three network news programs. Good luck.

Thursday, June 24. All three play up dramatic incidents of violence against Iraqis, in which more than 100 were killed in systematic attacks. The daily soundtrack out of Iraq builds anxiety at home, helping to fuel negative views about Bush's waging of the terror war, and casting doubt as to whether the war in Iraq was "worth it." This is not to say, of course, that attacks in Iraq are not newsworthy—but equally newsworthy are our successes there, which certainly do not receive equal airtime.

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The two political stories of the day are the president's Oval Office testimony in the Valerie Plame leak case and the Supreme Court ruling supporting Dick Cheney's position against releasing internal energy-task-force documents. Strangely, the anchors highlight how rare it is for presidents to testify in federal criminal proceedings without mentioning that the last president certainly did—for the Kenneth Starr investigation.

Cheney's presumably good-guy, anti-secrecy adversaries from the liberal Sierra Club and the conservatives-turned-mugwumps at Judicial Watch are blandly identified as "opponents" (ABC), "environmentalists" (CBS), and "interest groups" (NBC). In the Clinton era, Judicial Watch was routinely labeled "conservative"—when it was mentioned at all, that is. Peter Jennings wouldn't even say the words "Judicial Watch" on the air before the group sued Cheney in 2002. In all the coverage, secrecy is underlined, as in this introduction from Dan Rather: "The Bush administration would like to keep the workings of Vice President Cheney's energy-policy task force secret. Environmentalists and others want to know what's been going on and who's been doing it behind closed doors." No reference is made to Hillary Clinton's health-care task force.

Friday, June 25. Liberal bias is not unremitting; occasionally, the networks relent. After airing several televised segments with far greater promotional value, ABC and NBC both offer "truth squad" pieces rebutting claims in Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*. CBS and NBC both ignore the *New York Times* article finding contacts between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda, a link they both disparaged nine evenings before while mischaracterizing the 9/11 commission's finding of no "collaborative relationship" between the two. (ABC, which used the stronger words "no connection" on June 16, reports on the *Times* story.)

One story suggests a regular spin to look out for over the next few months. NBC's Kelly O'Donnell touts John Kerry's move to the center: "At every stop . . . on a range of issues, Kerry tries to line up in the center, hoping to reach beyond his own Democratic base . . . Kerry as corporate friendly. . . . Eager to tap fiscal restraint . . . and national defense." The whole piece lays out the thinking of "senior aides," who are "feeling no pressure from the far left." (Now, there are two words rare on television!) They say Kerry is "working off a successful Clinton centrist model," not the Gore populist model. Kerry's shifting rhetoric is, again, newsworthy—but so too is the fact that, prior to Kerry's presidential bid, the senator had long enjoyed a reputation for being a fervent "Massachusetts liberal." This network coverage, then, would be greatly improved by a laugh track—and mention of Kerry's lifetime American Conservative Union score of 5 out of 100. **NR**

things we like

In 1868, journalist Charles Dana wanted Reconstruction-era New York guided by a newspaper in favor of limited government, free enterprise, supply-side tax cuts, and equality before the law. So Dana acquired the *New York Sun*, and transformed it into a vehicle for literary journalism and an advocate for honest government.

Inspired by Dana's example, Seth Lipsky revived the *Sun* in 2002 with founding partner Ira Stoll. Given the politics of the *New York Times*, the tone of the *New York Post*, and the national focus of the *Wall Street Journal*, "we saw an opening in the [New York] market for an upscale, right-of-center broadsheet," Stoll recounts.

Upscale and right-of-center it is. Across its 20-plus pages, the *Sun* reflects the intellectual sophistication, stylistic flair, and high-spirited energy of the city that hosts and shapes it. And fittingly so: The paper started out with a "New York on Page One" slogan (to combat the *Times*'s shift away from local coverage). When the *Times* responded by moving Metro stories to the front page, the *Sun* decided to be its own entity, and to make sure that all of its coverage—local, national, international—embraced the paper's values and priorities.

Those values and priorities are rare among metropolitan dailies. The *Sun* is a vocal advocate of lower taxation, school choice, and tort reform; it has been very supportive of the war in Iraq; it is steadfastly in favor of Israeli self-defense. Its opinion pages carry Bill Buckley and Hillel Halkin; its highly acclaimed culture section—built largely by now-deputy managing editor Robert Messenger, formerly of *The New Criterion*—reflects many of that excellent journal's standards of traditional arts criticism.

The paper's values are also echoed in its headlines, in which American soldiers are referred to as "Yanks" (invoking a golden age of wartime journalism) and in which Beijing and its agents are identified as "Red China" and "ChiComs"—invoking a moral clarity long buried by the mandates of political correctness.

According to Messenger, these are "Sethisms," which gives some indication of Lipsky's influence over the paper's content and attitude. This is partly due to Lipsky's background, and his own attitude toward newspapering: He spent 18 years at the *Wall Street Journal*, where he came under the tutelage of the late Robert Bartley. "Bartley was one of the great influences in my life," explains Lipsky, "not just intellectually in the battle for ideas, but also just as a magnificent newspaperman and scoop artist." These experiences only further inflamed Lipsky's lifelong passion for the adventure of journalism.

This adventurous spirit—along with a sense of conviction, and the balance its convictions bring to the rest of the media—makes the *Sun* an invaluable addition to New York and, by example, American journalism.

—MEGHAN CLYNE

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Newsweeklies, Not So Newsy

Time and *Newsweek* serve up a lot of opinion—from guess which quarter?

RAMESH PONNURU

U.S. News & World Report, the major newsweekly with the lowest circulation, is also the one that gives conservatives the fewest fits. It is, however, capable of raising our eyebrows. The June 28/July 5 issue carries a long series of articles on "Defining America." One of the things that define America is "dissent," and Thomas Hayden has written an article on it. It contains nothing terribly provocative, or interesting, until the end, when Hayden suggests that America post-9/11 has silenced dissent. "[A]s shown by the current spate of media self-examination over an obvious lack of questioning of the government before the Iraq war, sometimes non-dissent can be just as harmful to the state."

Let's leave aside the equation of questioning and dissent, which in Hayden's formulation seems to give the media some quasi-governmental role and a duty to "dissent" from whatever administration is in power. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the media should have questioned widespread assumptions about Iraq's WMD program. But it is simply untrue that the media failed to dissent from the Bush administration, or to cover its opponents, about the war itself. Hayden need not examine how Howell Raines or Peter Jennings handled the pre-war debate to see this. He could just look at the newsweeklies.

In the August 12, 2002, issue of *Time*, for example, Michael Duffy saw an administration split into two camps: "one pragmatic, the other jihadist." He labeled Secretary Rumsfeld and his colleagues "the hotheads" and "the war party." They were "guys in ties" (not uniforms). Paul Wolfowitz was "fiercely gung-ho." Duffy told us twice, in the same article, that Bush had an "obsession" with Iraq. It would take a fairly dim reader not to see which side he was supposed to be on.

Duffy is still at *Time*. In the June 14, 2004, issue, he has an article on James Bamford's book *A Pretext for War*. There isn't a word of criticism of the book in the article. Duffy treads gingerly when describing Bamford's thesis: "Bamford comes very close to stating that the hardliners were wittingly or unwittingly acting as agents of Israel's hard-line Likud Party, which believed Israel should operate with impunity in the region and dictate terms to its neighbors. . . . Bamford . . . suggests that Washington mistook Israel's interests for its own when it pre-emptively invaded Iraq last year." Duffy is careful not to endorse that crackpot thesis—and equally careful not to question it.

Over at *Newsweek*, there is some good coverage of the war, including the July 5 cover story on Lt. Gen. David Petraeus's efforts to build Iraq's security forces. Yet the editors cannot resist using the line "Mission Impossible"—three times. It's in the cover text, the table of contents, and the subheadline. The editors also let Michael Isikoff write a short article debunking Michael Moore's movie, with a follow-up in the online edition. Isikoff's piece accompanies a longer one that is essentially pro-Moore. David Gates writes that Moore's "reading of recent history is hardly a seditious salvo from the extremist fringe. Last week alone, two mainstream bipartisan groups—the 9-11 commission and a delegation of retired diplomats and generals calling for 'regime change' in Washington—made some of the same points Moore does, though without the entertainment value." (The worst thing *Time* could think to say of Moore in its cover story was that he is as bad as Rush Limbaugh.)

I shouldn't give the impression that the newsweeklies offer unrelieved liberal bias in every story. For one thing, each of them carries conservative columnists. George Will is in every other issue of *Newsweek*, John Leo and Michael Barone run regularly in *U.S. News*, and *Time* often carries Andrew Sullivan or Charles Krauthammer on its back page. (Social-conservative columnists are, however, beyond the pale.) They may not get cover stories, the way liberal columnists such as Joe Klein and Jonathan Alter do, but it's something.

Other non-liberal copy can be found in the magazines. Robert Samuelson has a center-right economics column in *Newsweek*; Kenneth Woodward covers the religion beat for it with insight and without condescension. The July 5 *Time* had a balanced and thoughtful article by Daren Fonda and Barbara Kiviat on the controversy over the marketing of medicines for unapproved uses. It's much better than the hyperbolic demagoguery that Donald Barlett and James Steele, two *Time* writers who clearly think of themselves as populist crusaders, serve up on pharmaceutical issues and, come to think of it, all other issues. (They can't be trusted even when they're right, as they are about corporate welfare.)

What you will not find is copy that is *reliably* non-liberal, or even intelligent. On June 7, *Time* ran a cover package on America's obesity "epidemic." Page after page was devoted to advocacy for wide-ranging government intervention to alter Americans' eating habits, with a mere 350-word dissent by libertarian blogger Radley Balko. On June 28, David van Biema wrote about the travails of female preachers; all their difficulties at breaking "the stained-glass ceiling" are chalked up to "patriarchy." Only the absence of Samuel Johnson's quote about women preaching kept the article from being a complete cliché. *Newsweek*'s "conventional wisdom" watch is, notoriously, the most compressed expression of the liberal attitudes of the moment: an expression of conventional wisdom rather than a skewering of it, and an insufferably smug expression of it at that. The July 5 edition gives Bush, Cheney, *and* Wolfowitz down arrows; Michael Moore gets an up arrow.

Time's New Democrat columnist Joe Klein used to be, at least, interesting. He is increasingly conclusory and decreasingly novel. In 2003, he wrote that the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of racial preferences at universities was "a reassertion of sanity" that troubled only the GOP's "florid assortment of wing nuts." Everyone in the "vast sensible center of American politics" knows that racial

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preferences are obligatory. (Klein's center apparently excludes a majority of the voters of California. Must all be wing nuts.) His take on Bill Clinton, whom he interviewed as part of the publicity campaign for the former president's book, was all too predictable. "In retrospect, it is clear that there was no substance to the Whitewater allegations and the other White House scandalettes. . . . It seems clear that Starr conducted an unseemly and irresponsible investigation. . . . And it also seems clear that the press was way too credulous about Starr's allegations and didn't pay nearly enough attention to his methods." Q.E.D. Klein adds that it's too bad that Clinton was and is so "in thrall" to "his demons."

Liberal attitudinizing about current affairs affects even the newsweekly's coverage of the events of 200 years ago. The July 5 *Time* has a cover package on "the radical mind of Thomas Jefferson." In an introductory essay, novelist Walter Kirn notes Jefferson's opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts and adds, "To the extent that certain elements of the current Patriot Act smack of oppression, Jefferson might find it alarming too." A later article concerns the Alien and Sedition Acts exclusively. Its headline? "The Patriot Act of the 18th Century."

The essays get Jefferson wrong in their zeal to make him out as a civil libertarian: It's a matter of record that Jefferson supported state-level sedition acts that punished his opponents, and his objection to the federal acts was at least as much a federalist objection as a civil-libertarian one. More to the point, the comparison to the Patriot Act is absurd to the point of libel. The Sedition Act threatened imprisonment for "false, scandalous and malicious" writings against the government. The Patriot Act's controversial provisions involve, among other things, letting investigators in terrorism cases, upon approval from federal judges, search suspects' homes without telling them until later. It's not reasonable to call this oppressive, and it's not even arguable that it suppresses free speech.

Time's understanding of history is seriously distorted by its current political preoccupations. "It's a subject worth lingering over: Jefferson and Iraq," writes Kirn, just before proving that it isn't. The actual details of Jefferson's views are skipped over in the course of making a polemical point—and in a way that suggests real contempt for readers. Amid the Iraqiana we get this: "One controversy that led to his great split with Hamilton . . . boiled down to the financing of the Federal Government." And that's it. He won't worry our pretty little heads with that! Onward to the precious now. "It isn't difficult to imagine where he would stand on current debates about prayer in public schools, say, or faith-based funding for social projects." I imagine he would have opposed the social spending altogether—if I were inclined to indulge the preposterous set-up in the first place.

The newsweeklies still break stories, and drive much of the agenda of the Sunday talk shows. I'll bet that *Time* or *Newsweek* will have the best tick-tock on how John Kerry picked John Edwards. But there are enough other media out there now, and the market has fragmented enough, that these magazines are must-reading only for a very small number of people. Most of us, even Washington journalists, get along fine without reading them closely. Good thing, too. **NR**

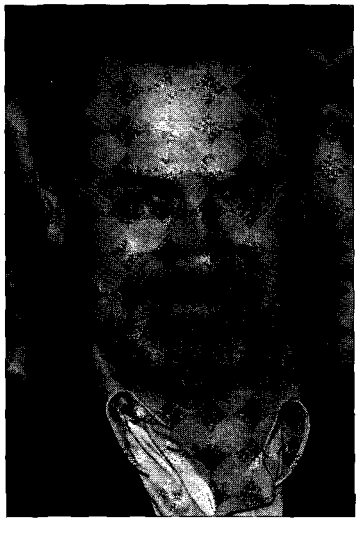
things we like

I've always found Dennis Miller an odd and rather queer fish. His inflammable down-home populism, pragmatism, and patriotism, combined with a slick showbiz persona, make him one of Dr. Moreau's more intriguing media experiments. As I discovered when I chatted with him, he's also quite pleasant on the phone.

And on TV as well. The former *Saturday Night Live* news anchor, HBO comic, and all-round ranting man has a new(ish) show, on CNBC, eponymously titled, which transmits Monday to Friday at 9 P.M.

Not merely an excuse to crack wise (à la Bill Maher on HBO), nor an exercise in corporate plugging (Letterman, Leno, et al.), *Dennis Miller* has its share of japes (good) and shilling (bad—a segment with the repulsive Larry Flynt, who's "written" a new book, was unpleasantly obsequious), but it also allows a surprisingly broad range of amusing, and sometimes intelligent, non-celebs and celebs to make their points. Miller—refreshingly for a talk-show host—lets his guests *talk* (even Dennis Rodman sounded fairly literate), then makes a joke to change the subject or to draw in those hitherto quiescent. I think he's found a fair balance between politics and comedy, and, compared with the inanities inflicted upon us by the 24-hour news cycle, the "Varsity Panel" part on *Dennis Miller* can be like attending high table at All Souls with Izzy Berlin.

Miller is socially libertarian and fiscally conservative (at anything above a "50 percent taxation rate, I'm tempted to dress up like an Indian and go to Boston Harbor"). He's not hugely enamored of John Kerry ("looks like an Easter Island statue in a power tie"), nor of the *New York Times*, which "has the reliability of *Auto Trader* but calls itself the paper of record"—a slander, I thought: *Auto Trader*'s employees don't invent datelines or rely on "intelligence" provided by dubious Levantines.



LISA O'CONNOR/ZUMA

September 11 galvanized Miller. He's since become a big-time, national-security, shoot-first hawk, the same man who compared Newt Gingrich to Hitler in the '90s today berating Marxoids for likening Bush to Hitler. Though comedians are not known, and rightly so, for their political consistency, Miller's revision of his opinions in the light of recent events seems genuine.

All in all, right now he's the ant's pants, the bee's knees, the cat's pajamas of politico-comedic talk-show ringmasters. And better yet, he's a NATIONAL REVIEW subscriber, which means we love him long long time.

—ALEXANDER ROSE

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Green Grow the Pressies

How the media get the environment wrong

IAIN MURRAY

In 1995 they told us that Yucca Mountain was going to explode in a nuclear firestorm. It won't. In 1998 they told us that nuclear-weapons installations were making people sick. They weren't. In 2000 they weren't concerned with arsenic in the water. In 2001 they were. This year they have claimed that the Pentagon is worried about global warming and that phosphate mines are harming Floridians. "They" are journalists, and the issue is the environment. What makes this particular issue so susceptible to bad journalism?

At least part of the answer has to be politics. If you followed the controversy over arsenic in drinking water in 2001, you could be forgiven for thinking that the Bush administration was plotting to poison the reservoirs. Yet in fact the Environmental Protection Agency had simply chosen to revert to standards that were changed only in the last few days of the Clinton administration. The press had gone almost eight years without noticing that Carol Browner and the Clinton EPA were happy to allow these "dangerous" standards of arsenic in the water.

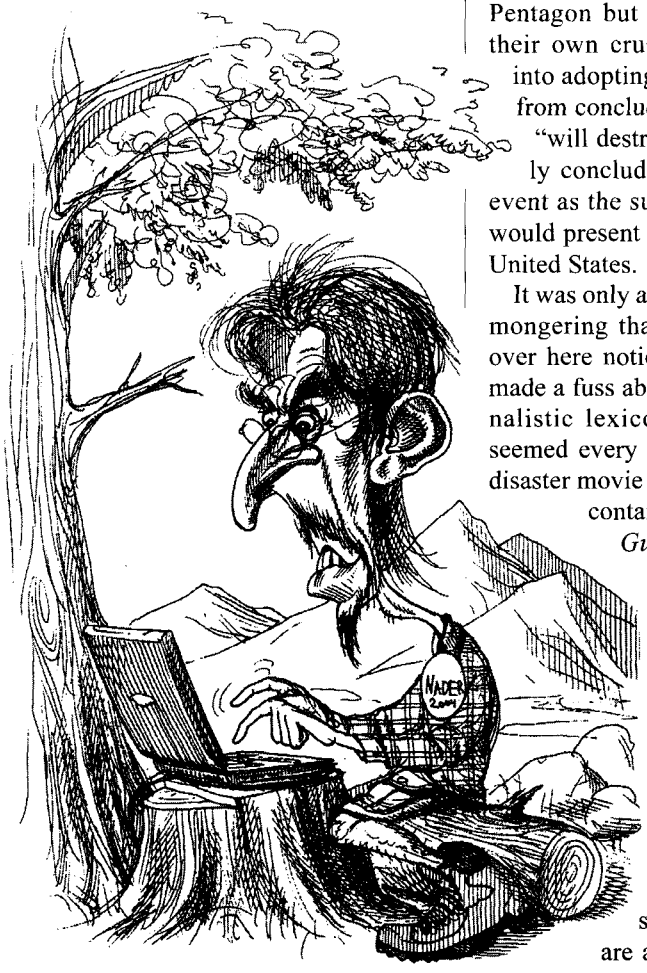
In other areas too, the press deliberately changed its tune. In 1987, the *Washington Post* had editorialized in favor of oil exploration in the Alaskan National Wildlife Reserve, saying, "That part of the Arctic coast is one of the bleakest, most remote places on this continent, and there is hardly any other where drilling would have less impact on the surrounding life." By 2000, when George W. Bush had made drilling in ANWR part of his proposed energy policy, the *Post* became concerned about whether "the oil to be gained is worth the potential damage to this unique, wild and biologically vital ecosystem." The *New York Times* similarly reversed its position on the issue between 1989 and 2001.

As strong environmentalism is one of the defining characteristics of the modern liberal, it should come as no surprise that the media lean toward environmentalism in their coverage of key issues.

Hence the pivotal role of Britain's leftist bible, the *Guardian*, in so many recent stories. Now that the Internet has made it possible to read other English-language papers daily, the *Guardian* has become a regular stop for those who find the *New York Times* too conservative. Given the highly politicized nature of most British papers, it is hardly surprising that its combative style has won many admirers on the American left (just as a whole new audience of American conservatives has come to appreciate the stance of the *Daily Telegraph*).

So when *Fortune* magazine ran a story in January about the Pentagon's investigation of the potential security impacts of global warming, no major American newspaper picked it up. On February 22, however, nearly a month after the *Fortune* story, the *Observer*—the Sunday sister paper of the *Guardian*—ran with the preposterous headline "Now the Pentagon tells Bush: climate change will destroy us." The sub-heads ranted, "Secret report warns of rioting and nuclear war;" "Britain will be 'Siberian' in less than 20 years;" "Threat to the world is greater than terrorism."

This is appalling journalism. The Pentagon had judged that the $100,000 report did not "meet its needs" and so rejected it. In any case, the report was not secret and was by no means "suppressed by U.S. defense chiefs and obtained by the *Observer*"—presumably by the furtive and dangerous method of asking the Pentagon for it. The report's only mention of Britain relates to its being a nuclear power; and the comparison to terrorism is actually made not by the Pentagon but by British scientists on their own crusade to terrify America into adopting the Kyoto Protocol. Far from concluding that global warming "will destroy us," the report actually concludes that such a dramatic event as the sudden onset of an ice age would present "new challenges" for the United States.



ROMAN GENN

It was only after the *Observer*'s scaremongering that environmental groups over here noticed the story. After they made a fuss about it, it entered the journalistic lexicon to the extent that it seemed every other review of the silly disaster movie *The Day After Tomorrow* contained a reference to it. The *Guardian* has gone on to break other environmental scare stories later picked up by the American media, such as allegations against the effectiveness of genetically modified rice in preventing blindness in the Third World.

Yet politics cannot be the whole answer. Sensationalism and ignorance are also to the fore. In 1995,

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Don't believe the liberal media!

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO MAKE THE MEDIA *"Tell The Truth!"*

According to The Pew Research Center for People and the Press, the national news media themselves admit their bias. By a factor of 5-1 they see themselves as liberal over conservative.

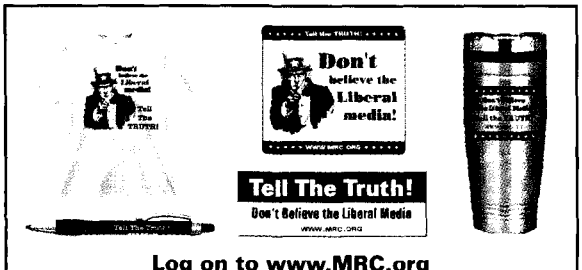
The public is on to the media's liberal bias. By a factor of 2-1, Americans believe there is a leftist tilt to the press. But many Americans don't realize the extent to which the liberal media are slanting the news. 2004 is a critical year for America. Americans need to see exactly how the press is distorting the truth. And with your help, the Media Research Center will do just that.

For more than 17 years the MRC – America's Media Watchdog – has been documenting, exposing and neutralizing the left wing press. We don't want a "conservative" news media. We want, and demand, truth. We want the news media to strive for objectivity at all times. We want balance. We want fairness.

And now we want you to join us in a national campaign to demand that the liberal media *"Tell the Truth!"* It costs you nothing to join. But the MRC does rely on tax-deductible gifts from individuals and corporations to get our message out, so if you can help with a contribution, it would be most appreciated. All gifts received from this appeal will be used to buy more ads like this, as well as to place more billboards all over America with our message.

We know we can neutralize the leftist press if we expose their agenda to enough Americans. We believe in the American spirit and we know there is strength in numbers. Together we can make a difference. Help us do something about it today!

To join the MRC and the *"Tell The Truth!"* campaign, log on to www.MRC.org/tellthetruth.



Log on to www.MRC.org
or call 1-800-672-1423 to find out how you can receive a "Tell the Truth"
MEDIA COMBAT KIT

The national liberal "news" media are using a partisan viciousness not seen since the days of Ronald Reagan, tossing any pretense of objectivity aside, distorting the truth, and simply refusing to report real news that doesn't fit their liberal agenda.

This must stop. It's time for the American people to demand that the "news" media *"Tell the Truth!"*

The country has been through a recession... and the worst terrorism attack in our history... and two wars — all since just 2001. And yet our economy is now booming. Ten straight months of growth. 1.4 million new jobs since August. The US economy over the past four quarters has grown faster than at any time in the past 20 years. All this and a massive tax cut, too.

And what of the War on Terrorism? We've toppled the terrorist regime in Kabul. We've ended the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein. Terrorists the world over are on the run. Or in prison. Or dead. America has been safe since 9-11.

Sure, things could be better. Things can always be better. But by any stretch this is a time to be optimistic. And yet you'd never know that reading the papers or watching the evening news. Day after day, night after night, the news media question, denounce, or just plain ignore our accomplishments. They want higher taxes to fund massive new federal spending for more liberal experiments like socialized health care. They want America – and the world – to see our military as corrupt and barbaric. And they'll denounce anyone or anything that stands in the way of their message.

It's time for Americans to come together with a simple message to the so-called "news" media: *"Tell the Truth!"* Please join our campaign to expose the leftist agenda of the national "news" media. Our leaders, our military, our country – deserve better. Join our campaign to make the media *"Tell the Truth!"*

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for instance, *New York Times* science writer William Broad publicized speculation by two Los Alamos physicists, Charles Bowman and Francesco Venneri, that nuclear-waste materials stored beneath Yucca Mountain in Nevada might explode. Their view was dismissed by other researchers as fanciful, and in any event would not occur for thousands of years. The front-page treatment by the *Times* was clearly inappropriate. Why did they do it?

One important insight comes from the admirable environment correspondent of the *Times*, Andrew Revkin. He says "environmental issues—at least the most profound ones—are generally the antithesis of news. They are subtle, slow-moving, complicated shifts that often hide in plain sight." To get the news value out of the issue, sensationalism is always a tempting option.

Just as egregious was a series of investigative reports in the *Tennessean* in 1998 that alleged "mystery illnesses" were plaguing people who lived near, or worked at, nuclear-weapons plants. Yet the evidence provided was a self-selected, self-reported sample. Just this year, as the Statistical Assessment Service has pointed out, the *Tampa Tribune* has been doing something similar in no fewer than 119 articles about Coronet Industries, owners of a phosphate plant in Plant City, Fla. The paper's claims of elevated health hazards associated with the plant have not been borne out by the state's independent scientific review. The *Tribune*'s response was illuminating: Its campaign had been "an exercise in journalism, not science. We wanted to know what ailed people, not what caused it."

When journalists are happy enough to junk the well-established scientific tools that help us separate truth from fiction in favor of their own methods, there's a problem. Whether they are motivated by politics, sensationalism, or a strange mixture of ignorance and arrogance, journalists the world over are painting a misleading picture of the environment. Small wonder that the issue is of little importance to Americans. In a Gallup poll for "Earth Day" this year, they ranked it second-last in importance from a list of no fewer than twelve major political issues. **NR**

The Case of Reuters

A news agency that will not call a terrorist a terrorist

TOM GROSS

MANY people still think of Reuters as the Rolls-Royce of news agencies. Just as the House of Morgan was once synonymous with good banking, Reuters has long been synonymous with good news-gathering. In 1940, there was even a Hollywood film about Paul Julius Reuter, the German-Jewish immigrant to London who as early as 1851 began transmitting stock-market quotes between London and Paris via the new Calais-Dover cable.

His agency quickly established a reputation in Europe for being the first to report scoops from abroad, such as of Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Today, almost every major news outlet in the world subscribes. Operating in 200 cities in 94 countries, Reuters produces text in 19 languages, as well as photos and television footage from around the world.

Though it may report in a largely neutral way on many issues, Reuters's coverage of the Middle East is deeply flawed. It is symptomatic, for instance, that Reuters's global head of news, Stephen Jukes, banned the use of the word "terrorist" to describe the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. Even so, such is the aura still surrounding Reuters that news editors from Los Angeles to Auckland automatically assume that text, photos, and film footage provided by Reuters will be fair and objective. Reuters and Associated Press copy is simply inserted into many correspondents' reports—even in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*—without, it often seems, so much as a second thought given to its accuracy.

Mr. Gross is a former Jerusalem correspondent of the *Sunday Telegraph* of London.

This has led to some misleading reporting from Iraq, and still worse coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The newswires are much more influential in setting the news (and hence diplomatic) agenda of that struggle than most people realize.

One veteran American newspaper correspondent in Jerusalem, eager to maintain anonymity so as not to jeopardize relations with his anti-Israel colleagues, points out that "whereas foreign correspondents still write features, they rarely cover the actual breaking news that dominates the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In terms of written copy on the conflict, I would estimate that 50 percent of all reporting, and 90 percent of the attitude, is formed by these news agencies. The important thing about Reuters is that it sets the tone, and here spin is everything."

In a study last year, the media watchdog HonestReporting found that in "100 percent of headlines" when Reuters wrote about Israeli acts of violence, Israel was emphasized as the first word; also, an active voice was used, often without explaining that the "victim" may have been a gunman. A typical headline was: "Israeli Troops Shoot Dead Palestinian in W. Bank" (July 3, 2003). By contrast, when Palestinians attacked Israelis (almost always civilians), Reuters usually avoided naming the perpetrator. For example: "New West Bank Shooting Mars Truce" (July 1, 2003). In many cases, the headline was couched in a passive voice.

Often it is a question of emphasis: Important and relevant information is actually contained in Reuters text, but buried deep down in the story. Many newspaper readers, however, never get beyond the headlines, and for space reasons many papers carry only the first few paragraphs of a report—often inserted into their own correspondents' stories. When the TV networks run only brief headlines, or Reuters news ribbon at the foot of the screen, the full text is never shown.

Sometimes, Reuters presents unreliable information as though it were undoubtedly true. Most people are unlikely to notice this. For example, Reuters will note that "a doctor at the hospital said the injured Palestinian was unarmed"—when in fact

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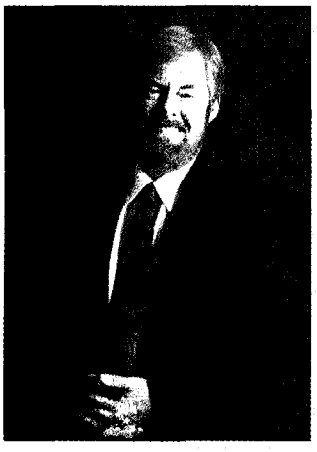
WEAPONS OF MASS DISTORTION:

The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal Media



L. BRENT BOZELL III

The leading expert on media bias makes the most substantive case yet proving the leftward bias of America's mainstream news organizations, and reveals why the days of the liberal media's dominance are numbered.

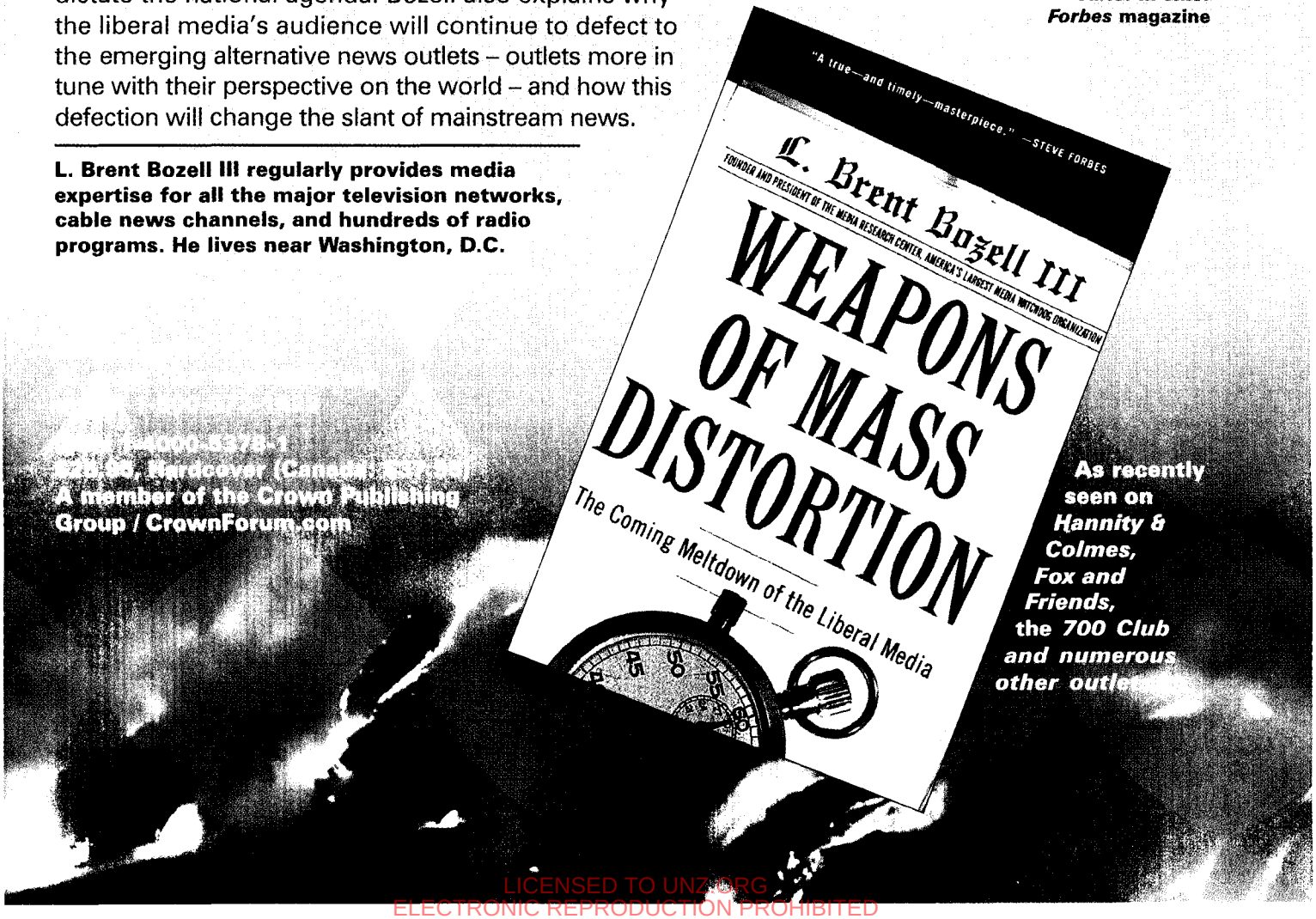
As founder and president of the Media Research Center, L. Brent Bozell III is a leading expert on the media. In *Weapons of Mass Distortion,* Bozell presents the definitive account of the current prevalence and future vulnerability of the liberal media.

With a wealth of facts and evidence at his command, Bozell reveals exactly how the major TV, radio, and print news outlets not only distort the news, but try to dictate the national agenda. Bozell also explains why the liberal media's audience will continue to defect to the emerging alternative news outlets – outlets more in tune with their perspective on the world – and how this defection will change the slant of mainstream news.

L. Brent Bozell III regularly provides media expertise for all the major television networks, cable news channels, and hundreds of radio programs. He lives near Washington, D.C.

"No one in America is better qualified than Brent Bozell not only to searingly, enlighteningly examine the sorry bias of so much of our mass media, but also to make the case that this liberal media monopoly mindset is in for an imminent meltdown. A true – and timely – masterpiece."

STEVE FORBES
editor in chief
***Forbes* magazine**


"A true—and timely—masterpiece." —STEVE FORBES
L. Brent Bozell III
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE MEDIA RESEARCH CENTER, AMERICA'S LARGEST MEDIA WATCHDOG ORGANIZATION
WEAPONS OF MASS DISTORTION
The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal Media

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As recently seen on *Hannity & Colmes, Fox and Friends,* the *700 Club* and numerous other outlets

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the doctor couldn't possibly have known this, since he wasn't present at the gunfight. But because he is a doctor, Reuters is suggesting to readers that his word is necessarily authoritative. Unfortunately, Reuters headlines and text are used unchanged by newspaper editors because they assume it is professional, balanced copy, which doesn't need any further editing.

Reporters of course can't be everywhere at once. The increased speed of the Internet and the demand for instant, 24-hour TV news coverage means that the world's news outlets rely heavily on Reuters and the AP, which in turn rely on a network of local Palestinian "stringers." Virtually all breaking news (and much of the non-breaking news) on CNN, the BBC, Fox, and other networks comes from these stringers.

Such stringers are hired for speed, to save money (there is no need to pay drivers and translators), and for their local knowledge. But in many cases, in hiring them, their connections to Arafat's regime and Hamas count for more than their journalistic abilities. All too often the information they provide, and the supposed eyewitnesses they interview, are undependable. Yet, because of Reuters's prestige, American and international news outlets simply take their copy as fact. Thus non-massacres become massacres; death tolls are exaggerated; and gunmen are written about as if they were civilians.

Sometimes, Reuters presents unreliable information as though it were undoubtedly true. Most people are unlikely to notice this.

As Ehud Ya'ari, Israeli television's foremost expert on Palestinian affairs, put it: "The vast majority of information of every type coming out of the area is being filtered through Palestinian eyes. Cameras are angled to show a tainted view of the Israeli army's actions and never focus on Palestinian gunmen. Written reports focus on the Palestinian version of events. And even those Palestinians who don't support the intifada dare not show or describe anything embarrassing to the Palestinian Authority, for fear they may provoke the wrath of Arafat's security forces."

One Palestinian journalist told me that "the worst the Israelis can do is take away our press cards. But if we irritate Arafat, or Hamas, you don't know who might be waiting in your kitchen when you come home at night."

Some of Reuters's Palestinian stringers are honest and courageous. But, according to several ex-Reuters staffers, they feel the intimidating presence of Wafa Amr, Reuters's "Senior Palestinian Correspondent." Amr—who is a cousin of former Palestinian minister Nabil Amr, and whose father is said to be close to Arafat—had this title specially created for her (there is no "Senior Israeli Correspondent," or the equivalent in any other Arab country) so that her close ties to the Palestinian Authority could be exploited.

As one former Reuters journalist put it: "She occupies this position in spite of lacking a basic command of English grammar. The information passed through her is controlled, orchestrated. Reuters would never allow Israeli government propaganda to be fed into its reports in this way. Indeed, stories exposing Israeli misdeeds are a favorite of Reuters. Amr has never had an exposé on Arafat, or his Al-Aqsa Brigades terror group."

But things may well be improving. Lately, with a new Jerusalem bureau chief, Reuters has taken some steps to ensure greater balance. For example, it no longer claims Hamas's goal is merely "to set up an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza" (which it is not), but instead writes that Hamas is "sworn to Israel's destruction" (which it is).

Reuters no longer carries the highly misleading "death tolls" at the end of each story that lumped together Palestinian civilians, gunmen, and suicide bombers. (Agence France-Presse continues to do this.) And, apparently, there are plans to relocate Wafa Amr by next year. Is it too much to hope that one day soon Reuters might actually call terrorism terrorism? **NR**

A Sad Falling Off

The *New York Times*'s cultural coverage is . . . well, not what it used to be

ROGER KIMBALL

In 1891, Henry James meditated on some of the difficulties newspapers and magazines faced in attempting to publish intelligent cultural criticism. Perhaps the chief difficulty revolved around the exigency of the deadline. "Periodical literature," James wrote,

> is a huge, open mouth which has to be fed—a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled. It is like a regular train which starts at an advertised hour, but which is free to start only if every seat be occupied. The seats are many, the train is ponderously long, and hence the manufacture of dummies for the seasons when there are not passengers enough. A stuffed mannikin is thrust into the empty seat, where it makes a creditable figure till the end of the journey. It looks sufficiently like a passenger, and you know it is not one only when you perceive that it neither says anything nor gets out.

I try to remind myself of this extenuating passage whenever I am forced to ponder the cultural coverage at the *New York Times*. Imagine having to fill all those pages, day in and day out. No wonder a squadron of dummies is kept in reserve!

I should say at the outset that I more or less gave up reading the *Times* in any regular way at the conclusion of Lent a few years ago. Why continue the penance? I asked myself. I quickly found I was missing . . . nothing. Oh,

Mr. Kimball is managing editor of *The New Criterion*. His latest book is *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art* (Encounter).

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sure, there is the odd outrage on the oped page, and a publicist on the arts page touting some particularly horrible specimen of artistic nullity. But all that could be garnered in two minutes on the Internet without besmirching one's hands or compromising one's pocketbook.

As Jay Nordlinger pointed out in these pages a few months ago ("Going *Times*less," March 22), the phenomenon of *Times*-quitting is gaining steam across the country. Everywhere, it seems, people are waking up and testifying to having broken the habit. Many stout souls go cold turkey. Others, less stalwart, continue to sneak the odd peek when safely out of sight of their friends (there is, after all, the matter of the crossword puzzle . . .).

Why? Politics is part of the story. The *Times* was always a left-liberal paper, but there was a time when one could distinguish between its editorial position and its reporting. In recent years, that has been less and less the case. There is also the issue of the *Times*'s coverage of culture. This is not, as it happens, wholly separate from politics. The politicization of culture has been one of the chief cultural facts of the last 25 years, and the *Times* has been an active abettor of that unlovely development.

Still, cultural coverage is distinct from political coverage, and about the *Times*'s cultural coverage three separate areas of deterioration may be observed. In the first place, its cultural coverage has become markedly less intelligent. Second, it has become notably concerned with maintaining the politically correct line about the subject at hand. And, as a corollary to both these things, it has become increasingly parochial: What the *Times* omits to notice these days could fill a newspaper.

Compare the range of reference, the diction, the level of seriousness in a typical article from the 1970s with one from today. The difference is startling. Here, for example, is Hilton Kramer writing in 1976 about the departure of Thomas Hoving as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Kramer acknowledged that Hoving had mounted some excellent exhibitions, acquired many important works, and greatly—enormously—expanded the museum. Nevertheless, Kramer continued,

> he has also helped to create a large blur . . . where there formerly existed a clearly perceived distinction: in the area where the experience of high art is distinguished from vulgar imitations and commercial substitutes. In everything from the creation of overglamorized installations to the actual manufacture of reproductions, the Metropolitan in the Hoving era has led the way in erasing a precious distinction—the distinction, after all, that is the museum's very reason for being—between the authentic and the inauthentic in art. This is what Mr. Hoving has taken away: our confidence that the museum can be completely trusted to defend the interests of high art.

Fast-forward to 1997, when Herbert Muschamp—until a few weeks ago, the *Times*'s chief architecture critic—offers a love letter to Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Muschamp, readers of the *Times* will recall, was the man who had earlier compared a Calvin Klein advertisement for men's underwear in Times Square to Michelangelo's *David*. What words can he find to praise Gehry's twisted mass of titanium-clad steel plopped incongruously in the Basque foothills? Well, "masterpiece" was one word, along with "miracle" and "a Lourdes for a crippled culture." Reaching for his most exalted terms of praise, Muschamp concluded that the building is "the reincarnation of Marilyn Monroe." (One recalls Susan Sontag's observation that "camp is the triumph of the epicene style.") The really great thing about Gehry's building, Muschamp explained, is that it severed architecture's chains to the past: "An art form that has long depended upon appeals to external authority—history, science, context, tradition, religion, philosophy or style—has at last come to the realization that nobody cares about that sort of thing anymore. Architecture has stepped off her pedestal. She's waiting for her date outside a bar on a rainy early evening in Bilbao, Spain."

The politicization of culture has been one of the chief cultural facts of the last 25 years, and the *Times* has been an active abettor of that unlovely development.

That's quite a list: history, science, context, tradition, religion, philosophy, style. "Nobody cares about that sort of thing anymore." Nobody at the *Times*, anyway.

When it comes to writing about culture, Muschamp is the model, not the exception, at today's *Times*. Pick a trendy artist or movement; the *Times* is there to celebrate it in the most extravagant terms. Many readers of NATIONAL REVIEW, having led exemplary lives, will be unacquainted with the work of Matthew Barney. He made a name for himself with video works like the five-part film cycle *Cremaster*, which was named for the muscle that raises and lowers the testicles, and *Field Dressing (Orifill)*, in which he is filmed "naked climbing up a pole and cables and applying dollops of Vaseline to his orifices."

That description comes from Michael Kimmelman, the *Times*'s chief art critic, who went on to describe Barney as "the most important American artist of his generation."

In the *Times* for Sunday, July 4, readers were treated to two inane interviews, one with the former Beach Boy Brian Wilson, one with the German Dada artist Gerhard Richter. Sample exchange from the former: "Is summer your favorite season?" "No, I like fall." The interview with Richter is about *War Cut*, a collage about the war in Iraq in which bits of 216 newspaper articles are counterpoised with images from the artist's 1987 abstract painting *No. 648-2*. Richter's *October 18, 1977*, his suite of 15 paintings commemorating the suicide of several members of the Baader-Meinhof gang, was just the sort of thing to guarantee Richter's status as a "transgressive" cultural icon. Sure enough, here is the *Times* in a note accompanying the interview assuring readers that Richter is "perhaps the most influential painter in the world."

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The lead story in the arts section of the *Times* on July 4 dealt with the lavish salaries paid to conductors (and some musicians) at prominent orchestras. The writer radiated disapproval of the orchestra's largess, but the story-behind-the-story was the fact that such well-paid, white-tie-wearing maestros "reinforce classical music's image as an elitist, exclusionary world that is increasingly out of touch with its listeners."

Actually, classical music, like all high art, is inherently elitist, but only in a restricted sense of that word: It requires discipline, talent, and specialized knowledge to practice or appreciate effectively. In principle it is open to all, but in fact it is open only to those possessing the talent and the capacity for spiritual exertion that serious music demands. It is just this that the *Times* cannot abide. A friend reported a comment someone made about the *Times*'s coverage of music: "The attitude of the paper can be summed up in one sentence: 'Contemporary good, traditional bad.'"

That gets at half of the problem. It is true that the *Times* gives preferential treatment to the new in all realms of cultural endeavor. But it does so only when the new is certifiably trendy. Let there be an artist of more traditional aspiration, and you can be sure that the *Times* won't have time for him or her. In the 1960s and 1970s, the *Times* made a concerted effort to cover most new gallery openings. Now it finds space only for the trendiest and most ephemeral.

It's the same with its books coverage. Many, many important books never make it to the *Times*'s review columns, but they always have space on the front page of their book review for a new biography of the pop singer Neil Young or the latest thriller from Stephen King.

What a sad spectacle; what a falling off. Dumber, more PC, more blinkered. It reminds me of that passage in George Gissing's *New Grub Street*, where a new paper for "the quarter educated"—people "who can just read, but are incapable of sustained attention"—is founded. It's a great success, of course, but then P. T. Barnum did pretty well for himself, too. **NR**

Loony Toons

Almost all political cartoons are on the left. Why should this be?

HENRY PAYNE

When editorial cartoonist Wayne Stayskal retired from the *Tampa Tribune* last December, he left as one of his profession's most admired craftsmen. (He still draws for a syndicate.) For four decades, Stayskal's distinctive, loose style and razor-sharp wit have thrilled his admirers, enraged his political targets, and explored the frontiers of political satire. In short, Stayskal embodies those qualities that make a great newspaper cartoonist: He draws both blood and laughs.

And yet Wayne Stayskal has never won the newspaper industry's top honor: the Pulitzer Prize. For Stayskal made one crucial career mistake.

He is an unapologetic conservative.

As Stayskal's experience shows, "diversity"—today's media mantra—applies exclusively to race and gender. At a time when news organizations have aggressively diversified their newsrooms by hiring more minorities and women, they have also become much less politically diverse. This monolithically liberal press—and the intolerance it has bred—are affecting one of the most outspoken, dynamic art forms: the political cartoon.

In the last ten years, not a single conservative editorial cartoonist has won a Pulitzer. In fact, of 30 nominations for the prize during this time (three are sent to the Pulitzer board every year), only five have been of conservatives. And it's not because the judges eschew strong opinions. In fact, the Pulitzer trend (echoed in other industry contests) has been to reward the most provocatively left-wing cartoonists in the business. In the last five years, Joel Pett, Ann Telnaes, Clay Bennett, David Horsey, and Matt Davies—Stayskal's sharp-penned peers on the far left—have all won the award.

Mr. Payne is the editorial cartoonist for the *Detroit News* and a freelance writer.

The Pulitzer establishment's bias has become so predictable that many conservative cartoonists simply refuse to submit for the prize. Award submissions, after all, require preparation and thought (and cost $50). Why waste one's time and money if the result is predetermined? Stayskal himself admits that he has not bothered to submit in recent years because of this prejudice.

Glenn McCoy of the *Belleville* (Mo.) *News-Democrat*, Stayskal's heir apparent as perhaps our funniest conservative cartoonist, also has stopped submitting. Explains McCoy: "Because of their obvious bias, I believe the Pulitzer is a totally illegitimate judge on the art of cartooning."

This current leftist dominance betrays a tradition of American cartooning that has historically been rich and varied in its political opinion. During the 20th century, for every Paul Conrad or Herb Block on the left, there was a Bruce Russell or Rube Goldberg on the right. Two- and three-newspaper cities fed readers' thirst for a variety of political views, and by the 1960s American editorial cartooning had matured into the best in the world. The creative fires were further stoked by Australian Pat Oliphant, who created a splash when he came to the U.S. in 1964 and treated Americans to comic scenes punctuated with biting, hilarious cutlines.

While Watergate unleashed a new generation of liberal activism in America's newsrooms, cartoonists—both conservative (Jeff MacNelly, Stayskal) and liberal (Mike Peters, Don Wright, Jim Borgman)—were creating funny, hard-hitting, visually playful cartoons in metro dailies across the land. This diverse stable of talent coincided with the presidencies of Nixon, Carter, and Reagan, and produced some of the best political art ever seen. Oliphant's Nixon, MacNelly's Carter, and Borgman's Reagan were sophisticated satires that visually defined their presidential targets.

In the 1990s, the increasingly partisan liberal press rallied behind an embattled Bill Clinton. Faced with "the Democrat's Nixon," newsrooms demonized Kenneth Starr, and, incredibly, gave Clinton more favorable press coverage than the prosecutor investigating him, according to the

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(non-partisan) Center for Media and Public Affairs. Cartoonists, less inclined to embrace the herd instinct than their newsroom peers, bucked the trend. Regardless of their politics, they smelled a snake-oil salesman—and Clinton proved to be a rich source of cartoon material.

But the emergence of a uniformly liberal press—accelerated by the 1990s consolidation of the industry into one-newspaper cities—was closing off opportunities for conservative satirists. The zesty menu of political cartoonists was being reduced to just one entrée: liberal.

And that's a pity, because American politics has changed, and satire needs new blood.

Unlike their colleagues in America's newsrooms (Dan Rather: "When you start talking about a liberal agenda and all the 'liberal bias' in the media, I don't know what you're talking about"), editorial cartoonists are actually quite refreshing on the point of leftist bias. They, at least, admit it. And they wear it as a badge of honor. Liberalism is necessary, these cartoonists say, because a good cartoonist is anti-establishment; he is suspicious of power and authority. It's no wonder, they say, that the anti-establishment '60s bred such a fine generation of cartoonists.

But "the establishment" is a moving target. The notion that liberalism is anti-establishment is a nice illusion, but it's 30 years out of date. Today, the hypocritical, self-satisfied protectors of the status quo are on the left.

The welfare state has failed, with its liberal champions denying their legacy of fatherless, unemployable children and tattered inner cities. The civil-rights movement has become desperate quackery, abandoning Martin Luther King's ideal of "the content of their character" for a permanent racial spoils system. "Green" pols park their SUVs at the curb and then bloviate about America's wasteful consumption. And fantastically rich trial lawyers claim to represent the "little guy" while looting 50 percent of their clients' winnings.

Imagine the possibilities! This grotesque menagerie is as worthy of satire as the fat cats of Tammany Hall or the railroad barons of yore. But this kind of commentary requires a conservative's eye, and today's liberal press is blind to it.

There are simply too few opportunities for conservative cartoonists in today's newspapers. Where metropolitan areas once offered readers at least two newspapers and at least two editorial opinions, most of today's metro papers enjoy monopolistic control over their markets—and are predominantly liberal.

St. Louis, Memphis, Des Moines, Atlanta, Charlotte, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Louisville are typical examples of conservative, middle-American cities that have only one cartoonist: a liberal one. Even in metropolitan areas where two newspapers do exist—Philadelphia and Denver, for example—both newspapers boast just a liberal cartoonist. And in Chicago, the *Tribune*—which was once home to generations of America's finest conservative cartoonists, such as Joseph Parrish, Vaughn Shoemaker, MacNelly, and Stayskal—no longer even employs an editorial cartoonist.

In this parched landscape, the weeds of political correctness threaten to strangle cartoonists not only on the right, but also on the left. These left-wing newspaper monopolies are increasingly sensitive to special interests representing minorities, women, unions, and civil-liberties groups, and they see conservative cartoonists as a liability—as politically incorrect rabble-rousers who provoke letter-writing campaigns and canceled subscriptions. Liberal cartoonists have been largely free of these concerns, continuing to attack conservative special interests—the religious Right, gun-makers, industrial manufacturers—with impunity. But the left-wingers are looking over their shoulders, wondering how long it will be before publishers feel compelled to avoid *all* controversy.

Liberal Ann Telnaes—one of only three nationally syndicated female cartoonists in the nation, and a Pulitzer Prize winner—strongly believes that a woman's point of view brings a different perspective to editorial cartoons, and is outspoken about the need for more women in cartooning. But if gender diversity makes editorial cartoons stronger, why not political diversity? A commitment to politically provocative and ideologically diverse cartoons would invigorate newspapers and ensure that editorial cartooning remains at the forefront of satirical invention.

If the newspaper industry wants to take that commitment seriously, it can get off to a relatively easy start: by recognizing Wayne Stayskal's brilliant career with the 2005 Pulitzer Prize. Won't someone nominate him? **NR**

HENRY PAYNE

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HELP!!!!

STANTIS © 2004 THE BIRMINGHAM NEWS COPLEY NEWS SERVICE
A DEMOCRACY WHERE NONE EXISTED? HA!
THEY'VE ONLY KNOWN FEUDAL RULE!
A LOT OF THE PEOPLE ARE STILL LOYAL TO THE OLD REGIME! PLUS, THEY ARE UNDER CONSTANT ASSAULT FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES!!!
I TELL YOU, THIS AMERICA THING WILL NEVER WORK!

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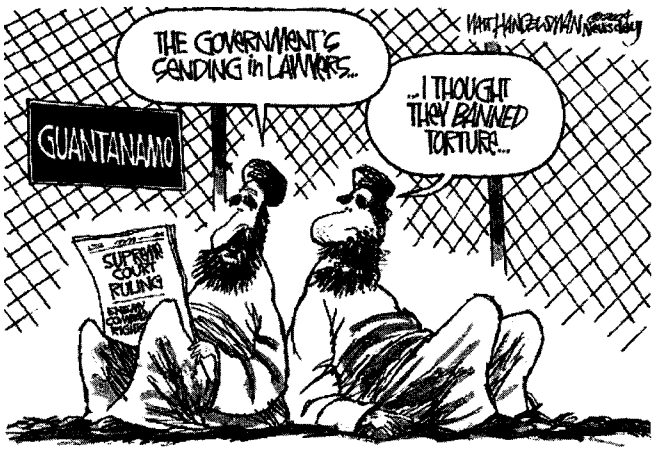
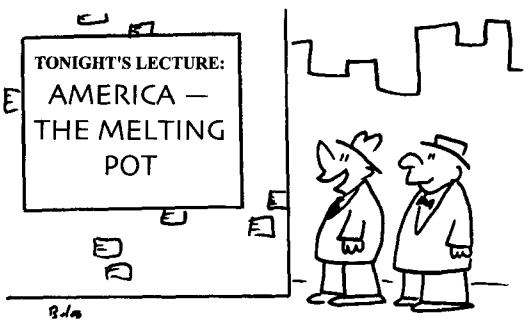
After Istanbul

The French will, with a 10-foot pole,
Aid, sort of, Baghdad's training goal.
The Germans, like a hired claque,
Lip-sync obscenely with Chirac.
The Turks, who sweat blood trying to
Break into Jacques Chirac's EU,
Received a leg-up from George Bush.
This sent Jacques into orbit. WHOOSH.

—W. H. von Dreele





"Ah, yes—the federal fondue."

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the long view

ROB LONG

Extract: Surveillance Transcript/Telephone Wiretap

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Hello?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Dick, this is John."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "John . . . ?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "John Kerry."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE SUBJECT: "Oh, hi. How are you, Senator?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "I'm doing very well, Dick, very well indeed. But it's my unfortunate duty to call you to say that . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "I'm your VP pick! Oh, this is great! This is just great! I didn't think it was going to happen, you know. I just thought, well, Dick, history has passed you by, too many failed runs at this thing, too much union stuff, too much . . . we're going to be an awesome team, John! Kerry-Gephardt '04! Whooooooooo! Whooooooooo! I am going to make you so happy you picked me, man! I'm just . . . I'm . . . oh, man, you know, I told myself I wasn't going to get emotional . . . "
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Dick?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Yes, John? I mean, yes, Mr. President?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "I'm calling to tell you that I'm NOT picking you."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Whaaaa?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "It's Edwards."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "You're freakin' kidding me."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "No. It's Edwards. I mean, he's young, he's . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "He's a millionaire. That makes two millionaires on the Democratic ticket! Are you out of your mind? Who's going to appeal to the regular Joe?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "I shall."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "You?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "When required, I can be very . . . what's the phrase? . . . *comme il faut*."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "I can't believe you led me on like this."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Dick, I did not lead you on. You jumped to conclusions, is what happened. Why would I have said 'it's my unfortunate duty' if I was going to tell you that you're my VP choice?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Because we're going to lose. But that doesn't mean I didn't want to do it, John. I wanted to fly in the big plane, just once."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Good-bye, Dick."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Kiss my . . . "

CLICK ON THE LINE.
DIAL TONE. DIALING.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Hello?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Hillary, it's John."
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Oh, gosh, John. Oh, John. Yeah. Hey, listen, of course I'm enormously flattered and immensely grateful for the offer, but I really have to decline. Respectfully. I'm sorry."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Actually, I was . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "I've thought about it and thought about it, and as much as I support you and the '04 ticket, I just don't think this is the right time for me, personally."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "But . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "But I am enormously flattered at the persistence of your wooing, I mean, good Lord!"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "I'm not . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "John, stop it! Really! I said no and I mean no. Don't beg."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Actually, I was calling to say . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Once again, I'm flattered, I'm touched, but I simply have to decline your offer. Did you get that?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Get what?"
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Not you."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Got it, Senator. We'll wait an hour, then release it."
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Great. Great. Well, John, good talking to you. And, again, I'm sorry."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "But I was . . . "

CLICK ON THE LINE.
DIAL TONE. DIALING.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Hello?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Tom? It's John Kerry. I just wanted to call to say . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Whatever. I just talked to Gephardt."

CLICK ON THE LINE.
DIAL TONE. DIALING.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Hey! Hello!"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "John, it's John Kerry."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Whooooooooo-ooo! John, I accept. I hereby accept!"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "But I haven't told you why I'm calling."
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Didn't have to. Just spoke to Gephardt."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "Well, I think we're going to have a great campaign, run a strong campaign with a great message . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Right, right."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: " . . . with energy and passion and *joie de vivre* and . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: " . . . a major fundraising network . . . "
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: " . . . appreciation of nuance and subtle textures and . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: " . . . building a national organization . . . "
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: " . . . certainly a sense of the historic mission . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: " . . . poised to really put to my own use . . . "
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: " . . . and of course, the debates . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: " . . . a respectable loss this year that no one blames me for . . . "
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: " . . . outreach, of course . . . "
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: " . . . with name recognition and an organization for '08!"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "What?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Hillary'll freak."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "What?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Sorry, what?"
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "You were saying something . . . ?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Just that I'm tickled to be on the ticket, John."
SURVEILLANCE SUBJECT: "I feel the same way. And now, *allons-y*, I guess."

CLICK. DIAL TONE.

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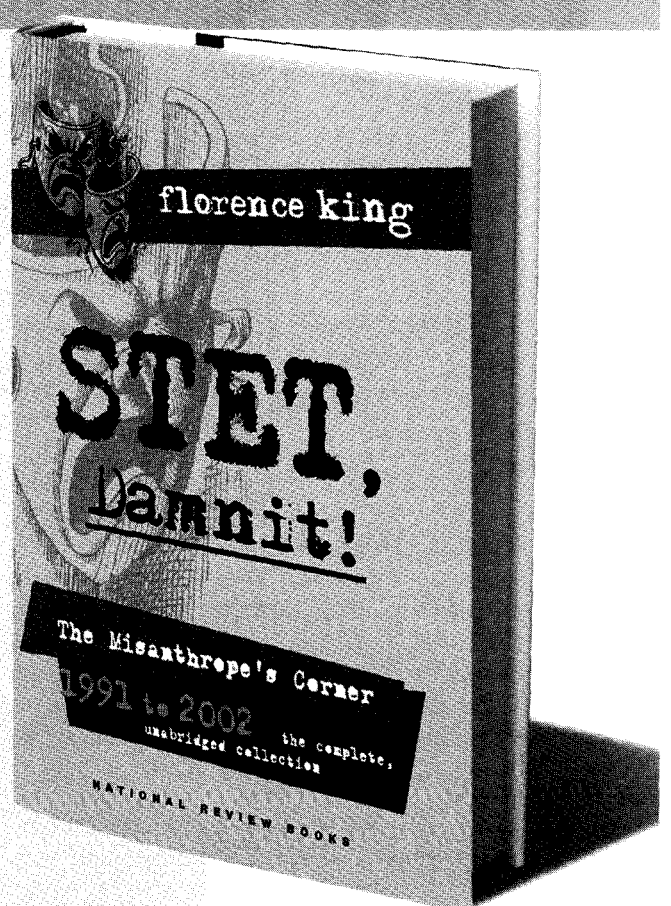

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Miles Still to Go

Miles Gone By: A Literary Autobiography, by William F. Buckley Jr. (Regnery, 592 pp., $29.95)

JOHN R. COYNE JR.

In *Miles Gone By*, Bill Buckley brings together material written over the past fifty years—"scenes and essays," he tells us, "in which I figure directly. What I have attempted is in the nature of a narrative survey of my life at work and play. There are personal experiences, challenges and sorties, professional inquiries, and memories beginning in childhood. There would be no point in contriving an autobiography from scratch. Why? I have already written about the events and the people that have shaped my life; any new account would simply paraphrase these. I hope that this volume achieves the purpose, and that it will give pleasure."

It does. As a literary autobiography it showcases his great versatility and talent as a writer, and there is nothing that gives greater pleasure than reading a first-rate writer at the top of his form. And beyond that, as the survey of a life, it captures the essential nature of the man—the goodness and decency, consistently there since the earliest years; the piety, the reverence for his parents, and the total delight and pride he has taken and takes in his family, and they in him; the simplicity and humility underlying that confident and sometimes snarkish surface that can reduce opponents in debate to gibberish; the joy in nature as a force, and in physical and intellectual challenge; the love of art and learning; the high intelligence, powerful convictions, and sheer presence that gave shape and coherence to a publication and then to a movement that touched nearly every public and political aspect of American life—a movement that led directly to the election of one president, a devoted reader of NATIONAL REVIEW, and a great and good friend of Bill's whom God took home in June; a second president who was vice president to the first; and, finally, a third who is son to the second. As the first president might have put it, "Not bad at all, Bill."

Miles Gone By opens on a summer evening in Sharon, Connecticut, where Bill's father—a Texas lawyer and oilman who had lived and done business in revolutionary Mexico and Venezuela—had acquired a house, Great Elm, to accommodate his growing family.

Summers at Great Elm are idyllic. But in 1938, Bill's father sends down an edict: Bill and two sisters will be sent to boarding school in England because they mumble. "In England we would learn to *open our mouths* when we spoke." Later, after the war, they learn that the real reason their father wanted the younger children away from home was that their mother had become pregnant again at age 43 and might not survive the birth. She did, and lived until 1985.

Two of the most difficult human qualities for a writer to capture and personify are goodness and beauty. Buckley does both.

"My mother worshipped God as intensely as the saint transfixed," he wrote. "And His companionship was to her as that of an old and very dear friend. Perhaps somewhere else one woman has walked through so many years charming so many people by her warmth and diffidence and humor and faith. If so, I wish I might have known her."

Her love for her children and her husband was absolute. When Will Buckley died in 1958, "her grief was profound, and she emerged from it through the solvent of prayer, her belief in submission to a divine order, and her irrepressible delight in her family and friends." Then her daughter Maureen died at 31, followed by her oldest daughter, Aloïse, and then her son John.

Then, the final scene: "Five days before she died, one week having gone by without her having spoken . . . the nurse brought her from the bathroom to the armchair and (inflexible rule) put on her lipstick, and the touch of rouge, and the pearls. Suddenly, and for the first time since the terminal descent had begun a fortnight earlier, she reached out for her mirror. With effort she raised it in front of her face, and then said, a teasing smile on her face as she turned to the nurse, 'Isn't it amazing that anyone so old can be so beautiful?'

"The answer was, Yes, it was amazing that anyone could be so beautiful."

This literary autobiography showcases Buckley's great versatility and talent as a writer.

In his portrait of his mother Bill shows us a woman of goodness and beauty. And he does the same in the sketch of his sister Priscilla, who attended Smith with Nancy Davis Reagan, went from college to the graveyard shift at UPI, covered sports, was sent to Paris, came home to help out during the early days of the magazine, and soon became not only the ablest

Mr. Coyne, a communications consultant based in Chicago, is a longtime NR contributor, a former White House speechwriter, chief speechwriter for Amoco Corp., and the author of five books. He is currently at work on a sixth.

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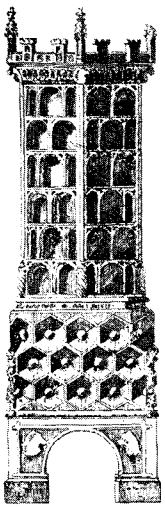
but, hands down, the prettiest managing editor on East 35th Street. "She does everything," he writes. "For the magazine, for its editors and staff, for her friends. . . . [W]ithout her, life is, well, unimaginable. On top of everything else, at NR we don't have to worry when the lights go out, because Priscilla is smiling."

This ability to characterize with quick strokes—just the right metaphor, distinctive physical characteristics, a snippet of dialogue, the tone and pitch of voice, the quirks and idiosyncrasies—the ability to make us see and hear runs through all the pieces in this book, from boyhood to epilogue.

Here is one of his professors at Yale: "A tall, ruddy-faced man with crew-cut hair who wore a hearing aid. He spoke the kind of sentences John Stuart Mill wrote. Never a misplaced accent, qualifier, verb; sentence after sentence of preternatural beauty, formed as if in a magical compositors' shop, by golden artisans."

At times, characterization comes through action, as when he first meets Ronald Reagan. The occasion was a speech in Beverly Hills in a high-school auditorium. Reagan was emcee. "His assignment was to introduce me to the assembly . . . But entering the hall we came on a huge bump in the road: not only was the sound system not on, the room where you turned it on was locked. . . . That's when I espied True Grit in the future president. He ascertained that the window at the end of the stage overlooked a parapet about a foot wide, which extended . . . to the window of the control room. So he climbed out the window, arms outstretched for balance, and edged his way above the roaring traffic to the critical window, broke it open with his elbow, climbed into the room, found the switch, and flipped it—and the show was on."



At other times, it's a simple phrase or sentence. Of his former colleague and mentor Willmoore Kendall: "Willmoore made it a practice never to be on speaking terms with more than one friend at a time." Henry Kissinger, he tells us, taught a course at Harvard in the 1950s "taken only by students who intended to become prime minister or emperor." And he writes of Whittaker Chambers's "sadworldiness" and his "link to the heavy machinery of history."

There is a touching tribute to Frank Meyer, "who would rise sometime in midafternoon and begin his working day, most of it over the telephone." (Those of us who owed him a review would wake up cowering when the phone rang at 2 A.M.) There is an appreciation of James Burnham, "the dominant intellectual influence in the development of [NATIONAL REVIEW])," and of his role as guide and teacher to all of us—including our editor-in-chief—who worked as writers at the magazine.

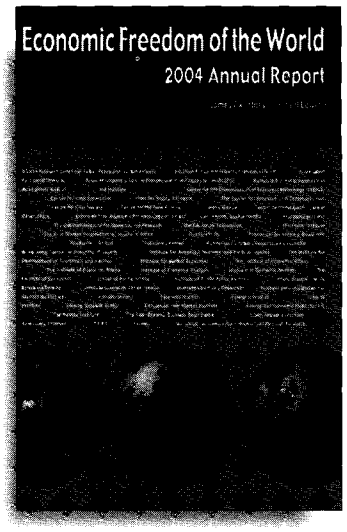
A similar tribute is paid to Henry Regnery, publisher of *God and Man at Yale*, a man who was important to Buckley as "a friend, a publisher, a mentor," working with him in those "very happy days in which book publishing was something of a personal partnership between publisher and author." In later years, Henry and Eleanor liked to reminisce with this writer about the days when Bill would visit them in Illinois and delight their four children with "Variations on Three Blind Mice" on the piano.

In these sketches and in the other pieces in *Miles Gone By*—a one-paragraph description of his home in Stamford, as visual as a painting; any of his descriptions of his boats and life at sea; his appreciation of his wife, Patricia, "beautiful, bright, humorous . . . and I will love her always"; his son, Christopher, a man of "singular warmth and grace" and "tough gentility"; his grandchildren, who "are works of art"—the touch is that of a writer of the first rank.

Finally, there's the man himself, and the spirit—the boundless energy and enthusiasm and joy that he brings to all his pursuits and to life, a life that has been full, fast, and active. Among the many adventures he chronicles here are his sail, with six friends in a 71-foot boat, across the Pacific Ocean; his descent to the ocean floor with the French team investigating the *Titanic*; his attempt, while a freshman in college, to master flying a single-engine

"An invaluable contribution."

—Nobel Laureate Douglass North



In the eighth edition of this widely acclaimed annual report, James Gwartney and Robert Lawson rank the economic freedom of 123 nations, using strict academic measures appropriate for peer-reviewed research. First published in 1996, *Economic Freedom of the World* is the result of a decade of research by more than 100 leading scholars. Every year the authors update the data in collaboration with member institutes in 59 nations, making it the most comprehensive measure in the world.

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plane; and, most nerve-wracking of all, his brief career as a harpsichord soloist with major symphony orchestras.

That spirit—the boundless energy and enthusiasm and joy—permeates this book. But there's another quality here, an undertone—a tone, a shading, perhaps just a whiff of melancholy. It's especially evident in a piece called "Aweigh," in which he tells us why last fall he decided to sell his boat. This is an important piece, for sailing represents for him much of the very best of what he has found to be good in life, both in nature and in "social pleasure"—"So that deciding that the time has come to sell *Patito* and forfeit all that is not lightly taken, bringing to mind the step yet ahead, which is giving up life itself."

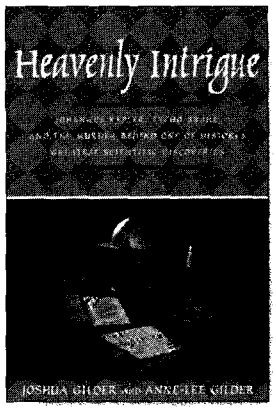
In his epilogue, in a lyrical and moving passage that approaches the spiritual, sailing is the image for that "step yet ahead." And while we acknowledge its force and beauty, the inclination is to say, Let's not rush it. There's plenty of time ahead for that last cruise. And in the meantime, there are miles still to go before we sleep.

There may be a certain apprehension here. John Kenneth Galbraith put it this way to Bill: "My fear is that the day will come when I write less well than I now do, and nobody will tell me and I won't have the faculty of knowing it for myself." But there should be no worry on that count for Bill. If that day were ever to approach, there'd be plenty of people dancing around the bonfire, delighted to blow the whistle.

In the meantime, we can say, on reading *Miles Gone By*, as William Shawn, editor of *The New Yorker*, said on reading *WindFall*: "The Buckley style, the innate goodness, is intact, and the humor is undiminished."

This is a splendid book, with a deeper layer that bodes well for future works. I envy the reader who is experiencing Bill Buckley's style, wit, talent, and innate goodness for the first time. In the years ahead, as he inevitably cuts back and gears down, he can, as he puts it, "still ski on his keyboard." And all of us who love fine writing will benefit from that. **NR**

Spheres of Influence



Heavenly Intrigue: Johannes Kepler, Tycho Brahe, and the Murder Behind One of History's Greatest Scientific Discoveries, by Joshua Gilder and Anne-Lee Gilder (Doubleday, 304 pp., $24.95)

ELI LEHRER

While every culture has developed myths and legends about the stars and planets, the systemic, controlled investigation of the night sky stands as a recent and exclusively Western phenomenon. Joshua and Anne-Lee Gilder's *Heavenly Intrigue* focuses on the tortured relationship of two men who originated this scientific study of the heavens: Johannes Kepler and Tycho Brahe. Their efforts laid the groundwork for the modern quest to explain and understand astronomy in terms of repeatable experiments and quantifiable laws. Brahe and Kepler jointly researched the heavens for about 18 months at the dawn of the 17th century. Their collaboration ended, however, when Brahe died suddenly after returning home from a banquet. In this new book the Gilders—he a novelist and former White House speechwriter, she a German-born TV journalist—present convincing evidence that Kepler murdered Brahe.

Their finding proves particularly stunning when one considers Kepler's sterling historical reputation. He was arguably both the first great European scientist born outside the aristocracy and the first to recognize that heavenly bodies follow complex, mathematically describable laws rather than the commands of supernatural powers. Although Nicolaus Copernicus first proposed a heliocentric model of the solar system, Kepler's studies (based upon Brahe's data) made the sun-centered planetary constellation useful. The Copernican model, which postulated that planets move in divinely ordained perfect circles, has almost no utility for predicting planetary motion; but modern astronomers and physicists still need to understand Kepler's laws of planetary motion. Historians of science can draw an almost straight line between Kepler's studies of laws of planetary motion and Isaac Newton's revolutionary explanation of gravitational forces.

In the Gilders' book, however, Kepler emerges as a distinctly unsympathetic character. He was the son of downwardly mobile tradespeople; his own *Self Analysis* (a private memoir) depicts him as a depressive, mendacious, self-loathing, self-aggrandizing borderline agoraphobic with morals "similar to a dog's." Brahe, on the other hand—a larger-than-life aristocrat who sometimes wore a pure-gold nose to cover a dueling scar—emerges as generous, kind, and literate.

In short and readable chapters, the Gilders trace the two men's careers from late adolescence through Brahe's death. Born to the top ranks of Danish nobility, Brahe studied in Germany and returned home to a life of luxury and ease (he was one of the wealthiest men in Denmark). He married for love, built an enormous castle as a base for his observations, conducted the best pre-telescopic observations of the heavens, and performed a wide variety of alchemical experiments. After a hostile new regime came to power, Brahe fled to Prague (leaving behind nearly all of his wealth), where he found an agreeable patron in the form of the crazed but generous Holy Roman emperor Rudolph II. Kepler, on the other hand, scraped his way into higher education by sheer force of will but found himself turned away—for a variety of political, theological, and personal reasons—from the religious studies and well-paid teaching posts he desired.

Mr. Lehrer is an associate fellow of the Sagamore Institute.

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Eventually invited to serve as Brahe's assistant (the Gilders show that he almost certainly wasn't the aristocrat's first choice), he worked with the older man for 18 months. Kepler did not like the work: He wanted to conduct his own research, and the position reduced him to the reasonably comfortable but utterly boring life of a well-compensated lab assistant.

In his letters, some of which the Gilders translate themselves, Kepler continually demands access to Brahe's observational data in between his whining requests for fewer responsibilities and greater perquisites. Generous to a fault with material goods, Brahe steadfastly refuses to share his data. Too nearsighted and impatient to conduct his own systematic observations, Kepler believes that the trove of observations could prove his own theories. This lust for the data, the Gilders contend, ultimately led Kepler to murder his boss.

The evidence certainly points in that direction. Based on new tests of hair samples taken from Brahe's remains, the Gilders provide evidence that he died from intentional mercury poisoning. A study of the hair appears to prove that he ingested a massive dose of mercury, and the Gilders, with the assistance of Johns Hopkins professor Lawrence Principe, provide a new translation of Brahe's drug recipe that shows he couldn't have accidentally overdosed on a mercury drug, as some scholars have contended. Kepler, who had ready access to the Brahe household and a discernible motive for murder, emerges as the most likely culprit.

Although the Gilders correctly credit Kepler with his important discoveries, the form of the book tends to overstate Brahe's historical importance and understate Kepler's. Kepler's later life, when he built the first accurate and useful model of the solar system, gets covered only in a hurried chapter that seems like an afterthought. Kepler may have been a terrible character but he remains a scientific giant who transcended his age. Brahe, who never gave up on the idea that the sun revolved around the earth, was a bright and keen observer whose scientific discoveries stand in the shadow of Kepler's great works. The Gilders' obvious affection for Brahe may lead them to let him off too easily for his refusal to share data with Kepler: They compare him to a modern academic guarding his data from rivals before publication. But today, as in the 17th century, junior scientists work with their elders for few material rewards specifically so they can gain access to senior scientists' data. Brahe's refusal to share his data with Kepler, therefore, isn't quite as innocent as the Gilders imply. It should be needless to say, however, that a bit of academic selfishness hardly justifies homicide.

This minor quibble aside, the Gilders have produced a brilliant, readable, and original historical work that ought to convince readers that one of history's greatest scientists committed a cold-blooded murder. **NR**

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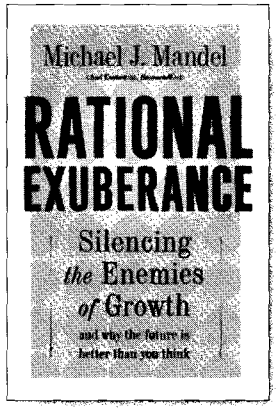
The Long Boom



Rational Exuberance: Silencing the Enemies of Growth and Why the Future Is Better Than You Think, by Michael J. Mandel (HarperBusiness, 224 pp., $24.95)

KEVIN A. HASSETT

When Ronald Reagan came to office, he had a strong faith that high taxes and heavy regulation discouraged entrepreneurial activity and slowed economic growth. At the time, Reaganomics was viewed as heresy by establishment economists, so much so that even members of his own administration publicly distanced themselves from their boss.

While much has been learned over the years about how tax rates and regulation affect the economy, much is still unknown. Since 1980, gross domestic product has more than doubled—and the stock market has increased tenfold. Why?

Economists can dissect the numbers, of course. They will tell you that a surge of technological innovation propelled the U.S. to a level of economic activity that was considered impossible in the 1970s. That much we know. But we do not know with certainty whether policy had much to do with it. Economists have hardly looked. Indeed, we have learned so little about the effects of our government's activities that it still takes something of a leap of faith to embrace Reaganomics.

Michael Mandel, chief economist for *Business Week*, takes Reaganomics seriously and tries to fill the gaps in our knowledge. In his new book *Rational Exuberance*, he shows that economists are still making the same arguments today that they did against Reagan. Back then, one might have forgiven them: No one had really tried Reaganomics, so economists had little evidence to study. But today, we have 20 years of data to inspect. Picking up where his fellow economists left off, Mandel applies the same kind of common sense that likely led to many of the policy changes of the 1980s in the first place. With careful reasoning, he searches out the key aspects of the American economy that make high growth and innovation possible and maybe even likely—and virtually all of the answers he discovers support Reagan. Oddly enough, Mandel does not highlight the connection between his own conclusions and those of Reaganomics. Perhaps his aim is to examine the ideas on their own merits, without bringing any of the baggage that historical associations might impose.

After completing this sketch, Mandel notices something troubling: People he calls "enemies of growth" are working aggressively to undermine the very foundations of our success. Their efforts have been so effective, he writes, that "we've reached a fork in the river of growth": "Along one branch flows a continuation of the 1990s—fast-moving, turbulent, exhilarating. Along the other branch lie more placid, slower moving waters." Reagan's victories may well be undone.

Mandel's list of enemies of growth is something of a Who's Who of the economics profession, including Democrats (Alan Blinder), Republicans (Martin Feldstein and N. Gregory Mankiw), and one shock-pundit (Paul Krugman). Their sins, according to Mandel, are many. As leaders in the field, it is natural that they serve as lightning rods for criticism; but perhaps the finger-pointing goes a bit far, and ignores their valuable contributions. The failure resides in the profession more broadly, which has ignored and belittled technology, while often advocating misguided policies that steer resources in the wrong direction. Among the other enemies Mandel points to are deficit moralists (also of both parties) who repeatedly oppose tax reductions because of their deficit impact, but who cannot point to any specific harm that deficits cause.

Innovation is unpredictable, but, Mandel argues, that does not mean that nothing affects it, or that believers (like Reagan) in the promise of new technologies are buffoons. Most important, innovation requires an appetite for risk, and a willingness to fail occasionally. The U.S. has traditionally had those characteristics in abundance. The result of our risk-loving approach is an economy with a dynamism unprecedented in world history. We do not grow over time because we make more and more of the same things: We grow because we make completely new and better things. To feed these discoveries, we have developed a venture-capital industry that channels

Mr. Hassett is director of economic-policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

DOKTOR FAUSTUS

See him cathedraled in his blackest magic
Haunted by Helen's blonde intriguing flesh:
Cloistered and Gothic, studiously tragic,
Tangled in introspection's golden mesh.

Supreme he sits in his voluptuous study
Conjuring breath-taking Helen back from Troy;
And if the lightning glares a bit too ruddy
Hell is the moment past his present joy.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

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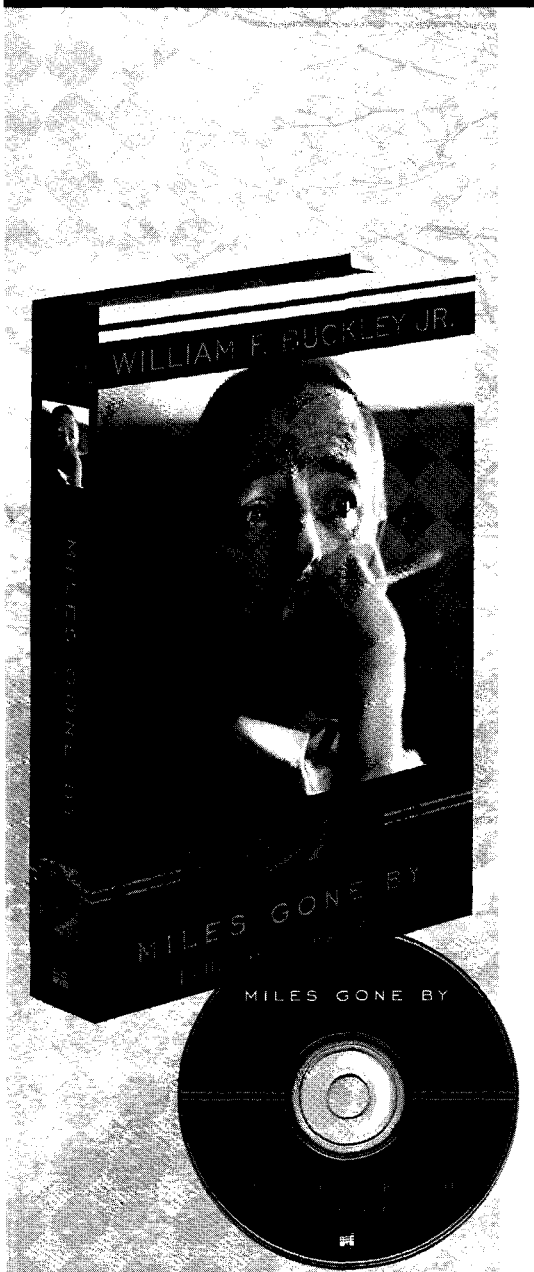
See what's inside...
The Autobiography of William F. Buckley Jr.



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The Life of Buckley...

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REMEMBERING

These are portraits—of people, primarily, but also of institutional presences in my life. One such is the protagonist of ten of my novels, Blackford Oakes. Another is National Review, *the magazine I founded and edited for thirty-five years. And the third is my television program,* Firing Line.

Whittaker Chambers, 1901–1961 *Underneath the gloom was tenderness and, even, a kind of gaiety*

Murray Kempton, 1917–1997 *A friend to anyone who was down, even Roy Cohn*

Henry Regnery, 1912–1996 *When book publishing was fun*

National Review, b. 1955 *The hour is late, and the printer's messenger is already waiting...*

Blackford Oakes, b. 1975 *First of all, I needed a protagonist*

William Shawn, 1907–1992 *His geniality was a matter of decorum*

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EPILOGUE

Thoughts on a Final Passage

Miles Gone By: A Literary Autobiography tells the story of the extraordinary life of William F. Buckley Jr. Buckley tells his story through tales of political, literary, and outdoor adventures—sailing, skiing, and flying—along with personal recollections of Ronald Reagan, Clare Boothe Luce, Whittaker Chambers, and other engrossing figures. Included in the book is an audio CD with 48 minutes of excerpts read in the inimitable voice of Bill Buckley, introduced by the sonorous Walter Cronkite.

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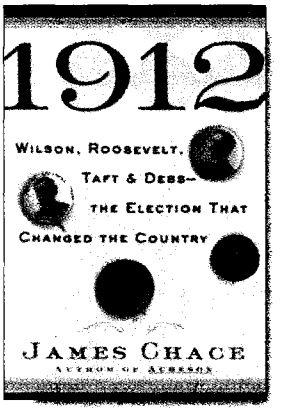
resources to promising new enterprises. The statistics are astounding. Twenty percent of public firms in the U.S. began with venture capital. They are, Mandel writes, "the equivalent of economic subversives. They have no vested interest in the status quo." And they have evolved into highly able subversives at that. The success rate for firms backed by venture financing is 60 percent—about six times the success rate for start-ups that are self-financing.

But a flourishing venture industry brings some problems. Capital will occasionally flow to ideas that fail miserably. Over time, the successes have outnumbered failures two to one—but the failures can pile up all at once and cause social turmoil. This undoubtedly occurred at the end of the Internet boom. Mandel makes the case that that turmoil is a necessary evil, but warns that the enemies of growth use it to generate support for intrusive government policies that purportedly protect us from loss but actually prevent entrepreneurship. Support for these measures has often come from both parties, especially in the past few years as new regulation has skyrocketed in response to the corporate scandals.

In highlighting this link, Mandel again echoes Ronald Reagan. In his famous 1964 speech endorsing Goldwater, he too remarked on the perilous allure to both parties of stability over turmoil: "There is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down—up to a man's age-old dream, the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with law and order—or down to the ant heap totalitarianism, and regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would trade our freedom for security have embarked on this downward course."

Perhaps it was Reagan's sunny optimism, clearly shared by Mandel, that helped him convince Americans to reject centrally planned security in favor of upward-pointing, free-market chaos. Reagan's exuberance was likely based on faith. Mandel's exuberance is, as the title suggests, rational. Rational, that is, if he can silence the enemies of growth. **NR**

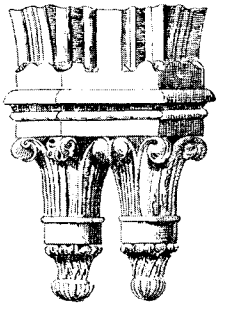
Wrong Turn



1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs—The Election That Changed the Country, by James Chace
(Simon & Schuster, 336 pp., $25.95)

MATTHEW SPALDING

"We stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord," proclaimed the candidate as he accepted the party's nomination for president. "Our cause is based on the eternal principle of righteousness; and even though we who now lead may for the time fail, in the end the cause itself shall triumph." Theodore Roosevelt was partly correct. While it was not quite the end of the world, the election of 1912 signaled a tectonic shift in U.S. politics, toward the new gospel of liberalism.



James Chace's book provides a compelling account of this unique episode, focusing on four extraordinary figures and the causes that divided them, arguing that the election was one of the most important in U.S. history. Indeed, it was.

With vivid detail and lively writing, Chace—best known for his 1998 biography of Dean Acheson—endeavors to capture the meaning of the epic battle.

Mr. Spalding is director of the B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies at the Heritage Foundation.

But in focusing on the defeat of Roosevelt's crusade, Chace underappreciates the nation's turn to progressive social reform: its political reorientation away from the principles of its Founding and toward the programmatic liberalism of the modern administrative state. Roosevelt may have lost, but his cause largely triumphed.

Increasingly progressive after his election to a full presidential term in 1904, President Roosevelt had declared war against "predatory wealth" and advocated the idea of administrative commissions to recommend regulatory measures to Congress; by the end of his second term, he was calling for a graduated income and inheritance tax. Roosevelt's secretary of war, William Howard Taft, considered himself a progressive as well; as president he pursued many of Roosevelt's policies. But Taft increasingly worried that the progressives' larger agenda—especially the increase of government scope and authority—threatened to undermine limited, constitutional government.

The beginning of the shift in American politics is evident in the 1910 off-year election. It was then that Roosevelt, inspired by Herbert Croly's *The Promise of American Life*, formulated a comprehensive program called the New Nationalism, which called for a centralized, activist state with strong regulatory powers.

Roosevelt aggressively campaigned for progressive insurgents in Republican primaries, and Taft actively (and mostly unsuccessfully) opposed them. The 1910 election brought in several progressive Republicans, and gave control of the House (and almost the Senate) to the Democrats for the first time since 1894, resulting in a bipartisan progressive-minded majority coalition in Congress; in New Jersey, a progressive—Democrat Woodrow Wilson—won the governorship.

In 1912, Roosevelt challenged Taft for the GOP nomination, and won almost all the dozen states with direct primaries. When the old-guard Republicans nominated Taft over Roosevelt in a contentious convention, the impulsive TR bolted to run as a radical reformer under the banner of the new Progressive party.

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Democrats smelled victory. After 46 convention ballots, they passed over the presumptive nominee, House Speaker James "Champ" Clark, as well as their three-time populist nominee, William Jennings Bryan, to pick Governor Wilson, a popular and solidly progressive reform candidate. After a few internecine squabbles, the Socialist party for the fourth time chose the charismatic Eugene V. Debs as their standard-bearer.

This four-way battle quickly became a two-man race between Roosevelt and Wilson—both disregarded Taft ("I don't discuss dead issues," TR quipped), and all but ignored Debs—and their competing brands of progressivism.

Of the two, Wilson seems the more reasonable. Under the guidance of Louis Brandeis, Wilson's theme was a "New Freedom," which emphasized tariff reduction and antitrust laws to break monopoly and restore economic competition. Chace rightly argues that TR's 1912 campaign "remains one of the most radical ever waged by a major American political figure."

The result was that Roosevelt and Taft divided the Republican vote, allowing Wilson to become the only Democratic president between Grover Cleveland and FDR. Wilson won a plurality of the popular vote, defeating Roosevelt, who outpolled Taft, who trounced Debs. With the defeat of Roosevelt's progressivism and Debs's socialism, and the election of the more moderate Wilson, Chace concludes, "the flourishing of American radicalism was over."

Taft began refocusing on the constitutional roots of his political beliefs.

This misses the proverbial forest for the (admittedly significant) trees. The 1912 election may have been the electoral high point of socialism in the U.S., what with TR coming in second and Debs polling 900,000 votes (Debs did a bit better in 1920, campaigning while in prison for his opposition to World War I). The Progressive party withered without Roosevelt, proving once again that third parties are an aberration in the American political system. But the combined tally for Wilson, Roosevelt, and Debs (75 percent of the vote) reveals a significant shift away from an older understanding of politics.

However imperfectly, Taft tried to represent the older view, deciding to "stand pat" in defense of the Constitution and the system of republican government it had created. Indeed, Roosevelt's insurgency in the Republican party led less doctrinaire progressives—including Taft—to begin refocusing on the constitutional roots of their political beliefs. This nascent effort to defend against progressive liberalism's mounting attack on political tradition could be seen as the practical beginnings of the modern conservative movement.

The problem with the old system, from the progressive perspective, is that it was

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What is Political Science?

The abiding problem of politics is ordering the conditions of life in a humanly satisfying way through the creation of objectively effective and subjectively meaningful institutions. Political order is constituted by symbols which represent what is conceived as the truth about the world and our nature as a part within it. The substance of political existence is psyche and hence the discourse that arises from it will always be hermeneutic. Political society is the space we create as historical beings through spiritual freedom. In political existence, institutions replace instinct and meaning replaces need. Political activity is a human vocation common to all. It cannot be avoided and must be responded to. It is the weakness of modern political consciousness to think that we can be so transformed as to be delivered from history while acting in history, and from political concerns while living in political society, or that the desperate modern situation renders political activity worthless. Mature political wisdom knows that neither history nor fate can be bypassed.

The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts was founded in 1978 by Catholic educators and emphasizes a return to the sources. College President and co-founder Peter V. Sampo, Ph.D. is available to lecture on *The Renewal of Christian Culture through Catholic Higher Education.*

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not able to adapt to new times—the new democratic era, and the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution and modern capitalism—and could not be mended by reverting to the Founders' political science. The original Constitution was seen as a reactionary document, designed to thwart democratic principles; the progressives wanted to reinvent it as "a living organism" capable of growth and adaptation.

A serious assessment of their political thought shows that Roosevelt and Wilson were in accord on this point. "We stand for the Constitution," Roosevelt explained, "but we will not consent to make the Constitution a fetish for the protection of fossilized wrong." "All that progressives ask or desire," added Wilson in his stump speech, "is permission—in an era when development, evolution, is the scientific word—to interpret the Constitution according to the Darwinian principle; all they ask is recognition of the fact that a nation is a living thing and not a machine."

In the end, despite their differences in style and degree, Wilson and Roosevelt were in profound agreement that the objective was to transform the old constitutional system into a genuine democratic instrument of the popular will and turn government into a dynamic, evolving rational state, not restricted to the protection of certain unalienable rights.

Wilson once observed that his was the first generation to express serious doubts about the Constitution and to consider "remodeling the administrative machinery of the federal government." It is no coincidence that while Roosevelt's domestic nationalism lost out to Wilson's New Freedom in the short term, the new president soon advanced a progressivism reminiscent of the Roosevelt-Croly regulatory state. The 1912 vote was important not so much because it rejected radicalism but because it recognized a new intellectual alignment that would shape politics through the 20th century. It was not merely out of family pride that FDR referred to TR and Woodrow Wilson as forefathers of the New Deal.

Far from over, the radical transformation of American politics had just begun. **NR**

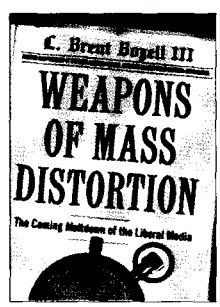
■ SHELF LIFE ■

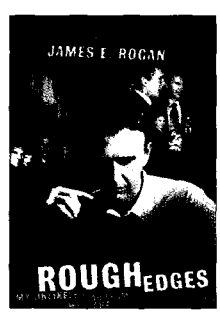
The Truth Squad

MICHAEL POTEMRA

L. Brent Bozell III is, as has been frequently noted, a national treasure; the work his Media Research Center does in compiling evidence of the media's flagrant bias is invaluable. Bozell's new book, ***Weapons of Mass Distortion: The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal Media*** (Crown Forum, 272 pp., $25.95), provides example after hilarious example of the press allowing its biases to obscure the truth.

One golden instance will serve to illustrate. In late October 2001, the venerated R. W. Apple of the *New York Times* asked: "Could Afghanistan become another Vietnam? Is the United States facing another stalemate on the other side of the world? Premature the questions may be, three weeks after the fighting began. Unreasonable they are not, given the scars scoured into the national psyche by defeat in Southeast Asia. For all the differences between the two conflicts, and there are many, echoes of Vietnam are unavoidable." Unavoidable, certainly; in the sense that to the obsessed patient his idée fixe is unavoidable. Bozell helpfully points out that despite the scoured scars in our psyche, and the unavoidable echoes of Vietnam, our troops went on to roll up the Taliban within the following couple of weeks.





Which proves that reality will preserve its integrity, despite what the *New York Times* says. And this leads to Bozell's deeper contention: A media establishment so willing to make empirically falsifiable claims is losing touch with its very need for credibility. If you semi-automatically raise the specter of Vietnam over Afghanistan, only to have your fears disproven within weeks, you need to adjust your worldview. If you don't, people will rightly suspect that your intellectual commitments are not rationally based, but rather a form of superstition. This suspicion is indeed mounting, and not just among political conservatives; it's the reason so many Americans are tuning out the biased mainstream media and turning to other news sources.

Bozell is part of an ongoing process of media reformation; this book is a step forward in that effort.

■ James Rogan is best known for his role as one of the House impeachment managers who made the case for President Clinton's removal from office. But if you look at those two facts—House Republican, Clinton impeacher—and think you know Jim Rogan, boy, do you have another think coming. His new book, ***Rough Edges: My Unlikely Road from Welfare to Washington*** (Regan, 352 pp., $25.95), is one of the most delightfully surprising memoirs to come along in years. Rogan makes clear that he was a political junkie from his youth, but that's not the part of this book that will have readers laughing and gasping. It is, rather, the stories about being a vacuum-cleaner salesman, a bartender at Filthy McNasty's, and—yes—a bouncer at the Pussycat Theater, a porn palace in greater Los Angeles:

> At the end of the night, the manager collected the used popcorn and drink cups thrown on the floor; the next day he reused them, cheating the owner out of concession-stand receipts (inventory was kept based on the number of containers used). Then he'd scrape hardened grease off unsold hot dogs from the night before and throw them back on the rotisserie the next day. When rats in the storage locker chewed open unsold candy boxes, he'd

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dump the remaining candy into used boxes and glue it closed. We got into an argument over it; I can't remember if I quit or he fired me. I lasted there about a week.

Some of the stories Rogan recounts aren't exactly appropriate for all ages, but what comes through in this book is a portrait of a good guy who made it the hard way: an American Candide whose optimism and love of country are infectious. The account is actually quite inspiring—and would make a terrific gift for your liberal friends who like to mock Republicans for being sheltered suburban Puritans.

■ Aficionados of politics are familiar with the obsession with ranking the presidents, and know how much fun can be had with it. Late in 2000, the *Wall Street Journal* and the Federalist Society asked "an ideologically balanced group" of 132 prominent academics to rate the presidents; 78 responded, and the results are presented in ***Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and the Worst in the White House*** (Wall Street Journal, 304 pp., $26), edited by James Taranto and Leonard Leo. No surprises at the top of the list: Washington is first, followed by Lincoln, FDR, Jefferson, and TR. But Reagan has already made it to Number Eight; which is sooner than we could have expected, given the ingrained opposition he met from academe a mere two decades ago. (An accompanying statistical chart shows Reagan as both the most underrated president of all time—and the second most overrated. He clearly remains a lightning rod for academic passions.) Also surprisingly, JFK has already fallen to almost the halfway point (No. 18); and his bitter rival LBJ has overcome Vietnam and the "credibility gap" to surpass him at No. 17. Few back in 1968 would have predicted *this* particular reversal of fortune.

The bulk of the book is devoted to brief biographical essays on the presidents, by a distinguished group of commentators. Historian Paul Johnson limns Bill Clinton with deft insight: "Clinton in fact did nothing. It was not so much masterly inactivity as mistressly inactivity, [which] had one outstanding virtue. It turned the Clinton years into one of the longest periods of laissez-faire in U.S. history. If Clinton had been a continent man, and so

Forrest McDonald

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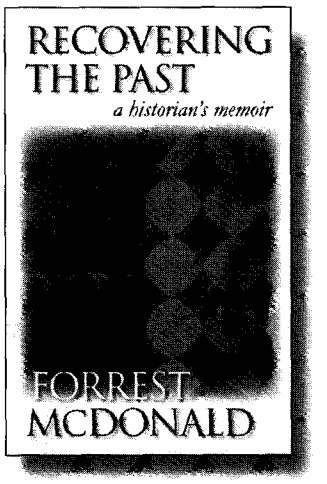

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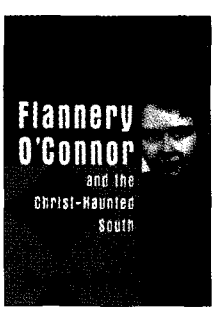
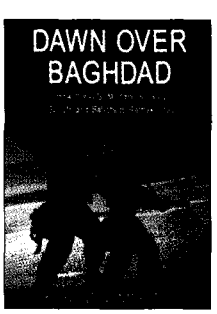
with time to be an activist president, the consequences would almost certainly have been disastrous for the American economy. As it was, with the president busy elsewhere, the nation thrived mightily, as always when the White House does nothing." Other highlights include NR's own Richard Brookhiser on George Washington, Christopher Buckley on James Buchanan, Jay Winik on Lincoln, and Peggy Noonan on JFK.

■ The Bible is a difficult book in two ways: It contains puzzles (problems involving textual variants and suchlike), but it also presents mysteries (profound theological issues of existential consequence). An enduring problem with Bible commentaries is that they are targeted either too narrowly, toward the micro-level linguistic puzzles, or so broadly that, while trying to serve a devotional purpose, they scant an intellectual grappling with the mysteries. The two volumes of the revised and expanded edition of ***Matthew: A Commentary*** (Eerdmans, 1,458 pp., $95), by Frederick Dale Bruner, strike just the right balance. Bruner writes clearly, and with theological acumen; his range of references—from the Church Fathers down to the theologians of the present—is extremely wide, but is not a display of learning for its own sake. When reading this book, one does not have the sense of beavering through a reference work; it is, rather, an intelligent, original work of theology. And it deserves the highest praise for any commentary—i.e., it really does help the reader understand the Bible.





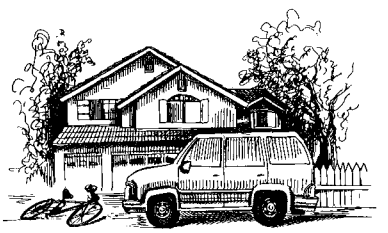
■ Flannery O'Connor shared theologian Karl Barth's "ultimately comic understanding of the gospel as undeserved mercy rather than much-deserved wrath." So writes Baylor University professor Ralph C. Wood in his excellent new book, ***Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South*** (Eerdmans, 272 pp., $22), which explains O'Connor's literary and religious thought in the two key contexts from which it emerged: her own devout Catholicism and the Protestantism of her region. "The South lost the Civil War in defense of an indefensible and evil institution. Yet it proved to be a blessed defeat," Wood writes, because the South was able to retain "its truest legacy, not the heritage of slavery and segregation and discrimination, but [its] Bible-centered and Christ-haunted faith." O'Connor's work is captivating precisely because it combines theological depth with richness of material observation; she recognized that to transcend a place you had to be *in* it. This book is an intelligent companion to some great writing that is strongly situated both in its region and in its theological tradition.

■ The fate of Iraq will be pivotal in determining the future of the Middle East and the Islamic world as a whole. In ***Dawn over Baghdad: How The U.S. Military Is Using Bullets and Ballots to Remake Iraq*** (Encounter, 237 pp., $25.95), journalist Karl Zinsmeister provides an important eyewitness account of the work America is doing to promote peace and democracy in that country. And there's cause for optimism: A scientific poll undertaken by Zinsmeister in four Iraqi cities (including Ramadi, "a resistance hotbed") found that "the Iraqi public is more sensible, stable, and moderate than commonly portrayed."

■ The emblematic passing of Ronald Reagan prompts gratitude for all the heroes, sung and unsung, who stood up against Communism back when it was riding high. One such was Democratic congressman Charlie Wilson of Texas, who—as a member of the House Appropriations Committee—led the fight for U.S. support for the anti-Communist mujaheddin in Afghanistan. His story is a true-life adventure, told with novelistic gusto by *60 Minutes* producer George Crile in ***Charlie Wilson's War***; this lusty tale, which must be read to be believed, is now out in paperback (Grove, 550 pp., $14). **NR**

■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Seer or Sucker?



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

THE *New York Post* Style section recently ran a piece about the dress guides that are printed on the invitations to society functions nowadays. Apparently such inscrutable directives as "Dress Festive," "Summer Chic," and "Creative Black Tie" are common, and even quite sophisticated New York partygoers are baffled by them. The *Post* does its best to help. Concerning "Dress Festive," for example, they offer: "Do not . . . attempt anything with fruit . . . Male guests are best advised to cautiously play around with the color of their jackets, shirts, or pants . . ."

Speaking for myself, I have never attempted anything sartorial with fruit. If invited to "dress festive," I should probably show up in a Hawaiian shirt, chinos, and plimsolls, which plainly is not what is intended.

These misunderstandings are one of the hazards of social life, and always have been. The young Noël Coward once arrived at a literary event in full evening dress, only to find everyone else in street clothes. According to Coward's biographer: "He paused long enough for the assembled intelligentsia to take in the full effect, then said: 'Now, I don't want *anybody* to feel embarrassed.'" (In a masterly display of turning life into art, Coward's short story "Bon Voyage" includes a scene in which an elderly *nouveau-riche* couple, the Teitelbaums, commit the same *faux pas*, but with less *sang-froid*.)

I think our own times are especially

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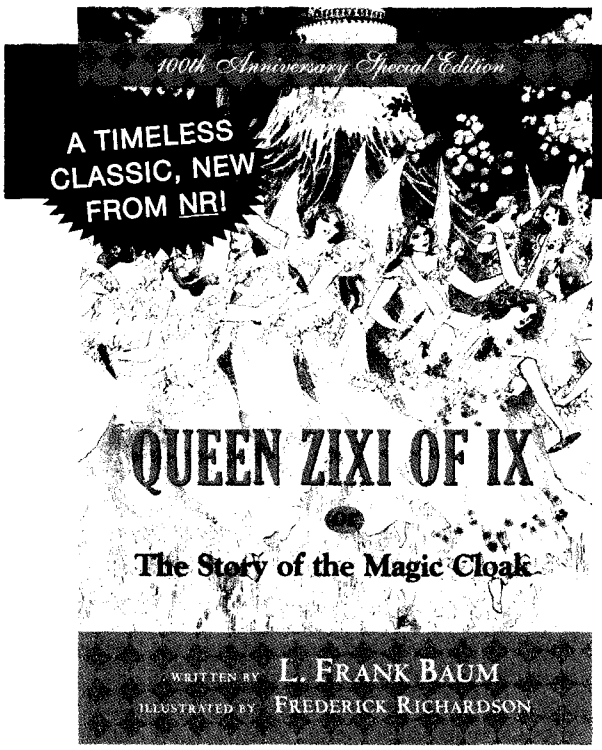
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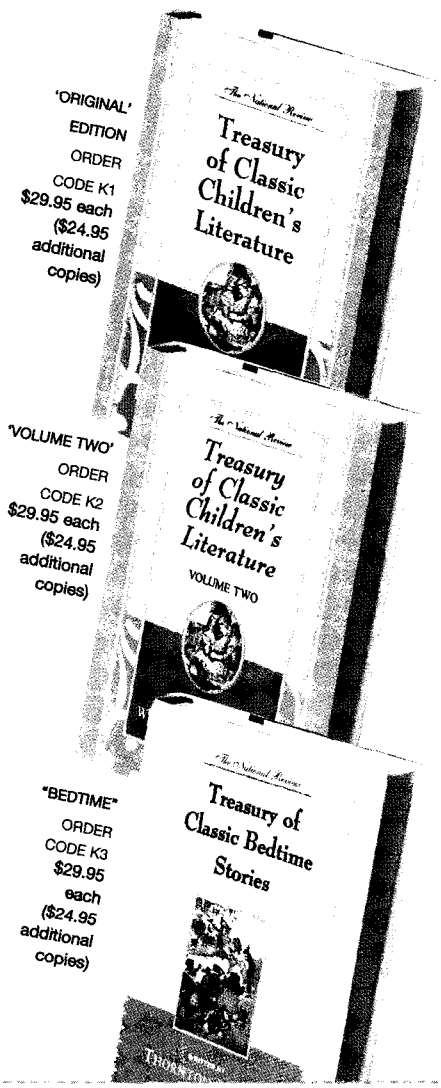
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It's hard to believe, but **The *National Review* 2004 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise** now features an even bigger and even *better* cast of celebrity speakers!

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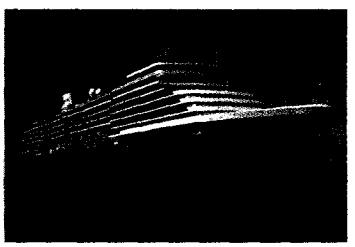

As *NR* cruise alumni (there are thousands!) know, our trips are remarkable events, marked by scintillating political shoptalk, wonderful socializing, intimate dining with our editors and speakers, making new friends, the rekindling of old friendships—and, of course, grand cruising. That's what's in store for you on the ***National Review* 2004 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise**.

There are countless reasons to come, but none bigger than the luminaries who will be joining us for this luxury trip! It may be the *best* ensemble we've ever had, which guarantees that our seminar sessions—featuring ample audience "Q & A"—will be fascinating.

✔ Who can give a better overview than **Dick Morris** about the ongoing antics of Bubba and future political designs of Hillary (as well as give special analysis of the post-election playing field)?!

✔ Where does one *begin* to question **Bernard Lewis** about the brutal revival of the millenium-old struggle between Islam and the West?!

✔ Ditto for **Victor Davis Hanson**, who will share his expertise on the moral struggle required for America and democratic nations to battle terrorism and defend freedom, as will **John Hillen**, the *NR* contributing editor who's in the know about all matters military.

✔ Who are *better* positioned to discuss the state of the Republican Party than chairman **Ed Gillespie** (who wrote for *NR* once upon a time before running the GOP), and true-believing conservative Congressman **Pat Toomey** (a rising political star)?!

✔ Who can give keener insight on the war between conservatives and RINOs (Republicans In Name Only) than Club for Growth boss **Stephen Moore**? Or a sounder assessment of red-hot cultural issues (immigration, campus "diversity," etc.) than the brilliant **Michelle Malkin** and **Dinesh D'Souza** (we'll also look for his take on the legacy of Ronald Reagan)?!

✔ And they'll be joined in all the elucidating and analyzing of the 2004 elections and their aftermath by *NR*'s editorial heavyweights: **Rich Lowry**, **John O'Sullivan**, **Ramesh Ponnuru**, **Jay Nordlinger**, and NRO headliner **John Derbyshire**.

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SUN/Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay	8:00 AM	4:00 PM	morning Catholic Mass evening cocktail reception
MON/Nov. 15	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
TUES/Nov. 16	St. Thomas, USVI	8:00 AM	12 Midnight	
WED/Nov. 17	Tortola, BVI	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	evening cocktail reception
THURS/Nov. 18	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
FRI/Nov. 19	Nassau, Bahamas	12 Noon	7:00PM	morning seminar evening cocktail reception
SAT/Nov. 20	Ft. Lauderdale	8:00AM		

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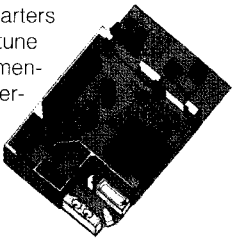

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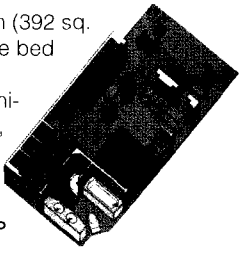

SUPERIOR SUITES Grand stateroom (392 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, and much more.

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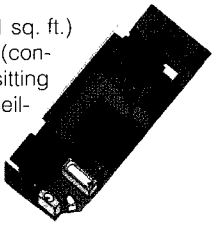

DELUXE OUTSIDE Spacious cabin (241 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bath with shower, sitting area, mini-bar, tv, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.

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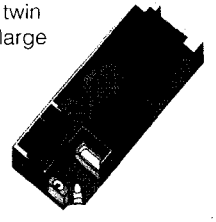

LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (190 sq. ft.) feature queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv, large ocean-view windows.

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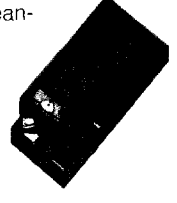

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (185 sq. ft.) feature queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv, large ocean-view windows.

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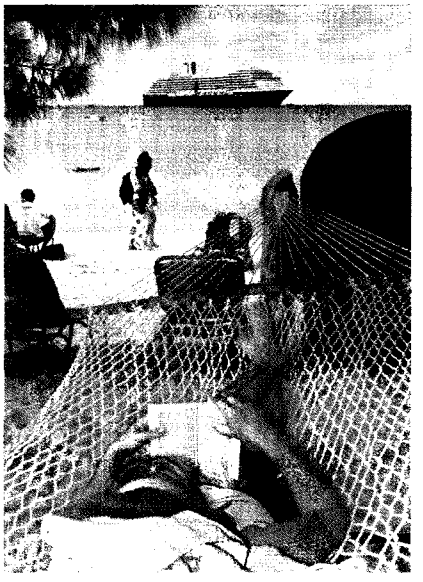

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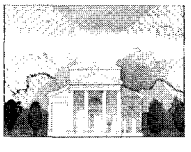

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rich in opportunities for embarrassments of this kind. The confusion of those Manhattan partygoers is symptomatic. This is an age of sartorial flux. We have swept away the old rules, but not yet settled decisively on new ones. We wear a suit for a job interview, get the job, then find that it's a jeans-and-sneakers office so we shall never have to wear our suit again.

Or consider seersucker. I actually possess a seersucker suit. I bought it for $200 at one of those factory-outlet places back in 1987. I put it on just once, looked at myself in the mirror, and realized what a ghastly mistake I had made. Seersucker, I perceived at once—though two hundred nonrefundable dollars too late—belongs on stage in the production of a Tennessee Williams play, and nowhere else on earth. I stored away this truth with the rest of my hard-won worldly knowledge, and the suit in a remote corner of my deepest closet.

Yet now, and notwithstanding the off-color jokes it inspires, seersucker is in something of a revival. The United States Senate has actually had a Seersucker Thursday, organized by the dapper Trent Lott. "It's a Southern thing," the senator tells us, "but it has spread far and wide—from sea to shining sea." One has a momentary blinding vision of alabaster cities populated by men in seersucker suits. Sen. Gordon Smith (R., Ore.), described by Lott as "perhaps the best-dressed man in the Senate," is on board; and apparently the enthusiasm is bipartisan, with even—good grief!—Dianne Feinstein showing up in seersucker. Time to dig into my closet.

That 1987 seersucker purchase was made on theoretical grounds. Just five years earlier, when I was living single and carefree in London, I had patronized a rather swell tailoring establishment in Hanover Square. I had better not mention the name of the place; it had been in business for 200 years when I arrived, and I am sure is still a going concern. This was tailoring for the carriage trade—for the kind of gent who, as the saying went, let his valet have first wear of a suit so that it wouldn't look too new; then wore it three times himself; then gave it to the valet for keeps. The friend who introduced me (it wasn't the sort of place you could walk in to; you had to be *introduced*) assured me that they numbered the Prince of Wales's personal secretary among their clientele. I learned later by chance, from a person who knew the proprietor socially, that he divided his customers into Gentlemen and Payers, with the humbler sort like myself subsidizing toffs in the tradition of Winston Churchill, who, six years after joining the Fourth Hussars, still hadn't paid the tailor who made his first uniforms.

The proprietor of this august establishment, whom I shall hide behind the name Flyte (which, though the same length as his actual name, does not have a single letter in common with it), certainly knew his business. On my very first visit, when invited to inspect swatches of cloth with a view to choosing something suitable, I dawdled over a rather fetching faint pinstripe in 20-ounce worsted. Mr. Flyte intervened. "If you will permit me to say so, Mr. Derbyshire, I believe we are a *warm* person, are we not? Perhaps something lighter . . . " Now, it is true that I sweat rather easily. I was not sweating at the time, though, and I have always striven to maintain the highest standards of personal hygiene; so how did he know? Sheer professional expertise, I suppose and hope.

At any rate, I was from then onward very attentive to the weight of the fabrics my suits were made from, with a strong preference for the lighter ones. This kind of obsession naturally leads one to extremes sooner or later, and the extreme of lightness in suit fabrics is seersucker. A seersucker suit jacket, if left unattended outdoors, will blow away in a mild breeze.

I still possess the suits, pants, and jackets Mr. Flyte made for me. For one thing, 1,200 pounds sterling was a great deal of money to pay for a suit in 1982, and I am not yet satisfied that those expenses have been fully amortized. For another, clothes of that quality last pretty much forever, especially if you spend 95 percent of your life working at home in jeans and a T-shirt. So long as I do not undergo any dramatic change of shape, I can look forward to being laid out at last in my Flyte & Sons three-piecer. This will concentrate sufficient sartorial gravity in my casket that mourners can be invited to "Dress Festive"—assuming, by that time, everyone has figured out what it means. **NR**

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on the right

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

A Special Odium

NEW YORK, JUNE 22

THE virulence of the anti-Bush movement feeds on itself, and is fed by bad news. The most copious source of this is the Mideast. The mode of execution of Paul Johnson had the effect the terrorists wanted. The announcement that he would be killed, followed quickly by the execution, followed by the posting of photos of the event, had the special effect.

It may help to recall that beheadings were conventional within living memory. They were the standard means of capital punishment in France, for instance, up until World War II. Even so, the sanguinary exercise chills the mind, and we are asked, however indirectly, to blame Bush for it, as for practically everything else going sour in the world.

A broad search of anti-Bush websites suggests the scope of festering animosity toward Bush. We have, e.g., BartCop, described by a compendium of websites as "Dedicated to hammering Bush and right-wing hypocrisy." The Smirking Chimp gives "news, rants, activism and other things anti-Bush," while the utilitarian Wage Slave Journal gives the George W. Bush Scorecard of Evil. BushAndCheneySuck.com is modestly "dedicated to licking Bush in 2000 and beyond."

That last brings to mind the temper of dissenters in the period of Franklin Roosevelt. It was a take-it-to-bed relief, after the disastrous defeat of Landon in 1936, that at least the two-term convention established by George Washington would mean an end to FDR in 1940; but of course he decided to run for a third term. Then Pearl Harbor happened, and there was distraction in the critical community, which paused to fight a war. By the time 1944 came around, reelecting FDR had become something of a routine, and the world went on.

As it will in 2005, with the reelection of George W. Bush?

History tends to reassure us on this point. Elections have assimilated American dissent since 1860. The mark of democracy is submission to the majority. But this time around, if the current figures hold, the rupture will be deepened. As of yesterday, the polls were showing Kerry, 48; Bush, 44; Nader, 6. The first two of these data are not striking; a seesaw between the two principal candidates happens frequently. The Nader factor is troubling, however, because if Bush defeats Kerry by a margin less than the nick taken by Nader, the anti-Bush community will think itself robbed again. It happened to us, they will be saying, when Gore had the popular vote and we lost by a judicial caprice. Now, if Nader is responsible for a fresh loss, we have to wonder about the reliability of democratic practices.

The kind of people who generate BushAndCheneySuck.com don't make up dissent at an institutional level. If Bush wins, even on account of the Nader factor, it is not likely that the U.S. will stampede for a Constitutional Convention jettisoning the Electoral College. Such an amendment couldn't get by the states that would be disfranchised on account of it.

But there is a special odium at large in the matter of Bush. It will seek to release itself by a rabid campaign against him. But there will need to be a tranquilizing factor in the campaign. If, for instance, Bush handles Kerry confidently and dispositively in the debates, that could provide a sense of democratic vindication. If progress in Iraq under native rule pivots the scene slightly, but substantially, toward stability, Bush could legitimately profit.

In the absence of such developments, the anti-Bush diehards are headed for a disillusionment likely to affect the democratic culture. What matters, in democratic elections, is not only submission to the majority, but also civil relations.

Nobody from the world of BartCop is going to end up loving Bush himself, but everyone has to gain from a lowering of voices. This isn't going to happen until after this era's Pearl Harbor, on Nov. 2, a long four months away.

Long Live the Public

NEW YORK, JUNE 25

PUBLIC demonstrations measured by crowd sizes are not absolutely reliable epistemological demonstrations of public favor or disfavor. There were moments in the events that followed the death of Ronald Reagan that gave the tribute to his memory a special force. Indeed, the recognition of the special qualities of the man and the president disarmed most of Reagan's conventional critics. But the naysayers weren't silenced. One of them was driven to remind us, and, one supposes, *The Guinness Book of World Records*, that the death of Warren Harding brought out more people to line the streets of sorrow than the death of Reagan. From which one is supposed to deduce something. I guess, that Ronald Reagan may in the future emerge as a lesser figure than Warren Harding.

But only two weeks after the Reagan funeral we had the Clinton book. New York is a pretty blasé city, but grown men and women swooned with admiration, love, and reverence when Mr. Clinton came to town to sign copies of his book. One observer once again relied on comparisons. He said that the crowds, and the intensity of their devotion, exceeded what was done for the Beatles back then, or could be done for Madonna today.

What were they looking for? People who have reported on the book haven't unearthed what the worshippers are after, but then that's because they are not after anything at all. They are, simply, full-time altar boys in the cathedral. They want to love Clinton, who wants to be loved, and would probably be president today but for the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution. You can spend all year shaking that tree hoping for droplets of reason or wisdom, but they wouldn't come down, wouldn't, even if the book were ten times the unreadable length it now is.

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Then too, there are crowds not of Reagan/Clinton size but large on the scale on which critical event crowds are measured. Notable is the crowd attendant on the release of *Fahrenheit 9/11*. It is the production of comic ideologue Michael Moore. Its thesis is, approximately, that Bush and Cheney are war criminals, and capitalist tools engaged in war-for-profit.

Left-leaning columnist Christopher Hitchens is given to wayward excesses, but he devotes sharp attention to the Moore crowd pleaser in *Slate*, in an article titled, "Unfairenheit 9/11." It makes pretty good reading, and it's unfair to go to the last chapter, but life is short, and therefore I disclose it. "*Fahrenheit 9/11* is a sinister exercise in moral frivolity, crudely disguised as an exercise in seriousness. It is also a spectacle of abject political cowardice masking itself as a demonstration of 'dissenting' bravery."

You got that?

But the article isn't mere obloquy. It is analytical.

Consider the golf scene. "The president is captured in a well-worn TV news clip, on a golf course, making a boilerplate response to a question on terrorism and then asking the reporters to watch his drive."

Moore's idea is to communicate President Bush's insouciance by juxtaposing war & golf. Here is how Hitchens handles that: "Well, that's what you get if you catch the president on a golf course. If Eisenhower had done this, as he often did, it would have been presented as calm statesmanship. If Clinton had done it, as he often did, it would have shown his charm."

Yet those who are impatient, who were dismayed by the crowds that sought the inside story of the Kennedy assassination by viewing Oliver Stone movies, reasonably refuse public despair. The display of thoughtful grief over Reagan's death is a better measure of ultimate sobriety than Clinton at Barnes & Noble, or Michael Moore, prophet of Bush showing off his golf drive, and revealing his soul.

George Bush keeps saying that he has confidence in the good judgment of the American people. This isn't just political obsequiousness. The American people can't be counted on for unerring political judgments, but they are ever so much more reliable than Michael Moore, and they can weather, in the longer seasons, even the charm storms of William Jefferson Clinton.

Self-Mutilation

NEW YORK, JULY 6

One important irritant is the ruling done by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). It has ordained that Cuban-Americans may not visit their families in Cuba more often than once every three years, that they may not spend more than $50 per day, that they may not stay in Cuba for more than two weeks (this is Uncle Sam talking, not Fidel Castro), and that contributions to Cuban family members must be limited to $1,200 per household per year.

Nobody who keeps political tallies will deny that these initiatives are politically based. This conclusion derives from a general knowledge of the impotence of boycotts, and a particular knowledge of Castro's indomitability. So the pinpricks are not going to derail Castro—will they deliver Florida to Bush? That of course is the idea. If it's anti-Castro, the Cuban-American community is for it, right?

But not all Cuban-Americans will cheer. For one thing, the law is designed to prevent them from doing what some of them would otherwise do. Regulations of the kind promulgated by OFAC have no effect on people who do not plan to visit in Cuba or to send money for Cuban relief. It can be held that the measures affect everyone concerned with a free Cuba—if it could be established in which way they would tilt the Castro scene. If they weakened him, the world would benefit. If they strengthened him, then we would have bad politics bringing on bad days.

Some Cuban-Americans, who no longer have family ties to Cuba (Castro took power 45 years ago), have expressed resentment of those who feel free to travel to Havana. There are Cuban-Americans who believe that any traffic of any kind with Castro weakens the solidarity of U.S. policy.

But such policies haven't brought on reforms. No reform in Cuba is going to be effective except as it brings on the death or retirement of Castro. He is a monument of socialist dogma. In the early 1960s he chided Khrushchev for exhibiting less ideological rectitude than Mao Tse-tung. There isn't anything this side of a volcanic eruption while he is nesting in the volcano's crater that is going to get him to loosen up. The papal visit in 1998, to which so much hope was attached, had no permanent effect. Even the American Library Association simply gave up on a movement to gain liberty for jailed Cuban librarians.

There is a very high cost to Castro's obduracy. But the cost being paid is by Cubans. Over here, it is odd that a government that recognizes the government of Vietnam, and is ready and willing to send aid to Sudan and the Congo, should engage, for spite and politics, in denying to Cuban-Americans the right to gratify their own impulses.

There is resistance to this initiative of OFAC. Congressman Jeff Flake of Arizona has for three years sponsored an amendment (the Flake Amendment) which seeks to forbid the use of federal funds to enforce the United States' anti-travel regulations. He recently succeeded in getting the Senate's endorsement of it. But that is still this side of the horsepower required to write the provisions into law. His own view is that the new OFAC regulations will net damage Republican political interests in November.

The final irony is that Fidel Castro is being permitted, by Americans, to impinge on the freedom of Americans. That, at least, should please Castro, and he can ride about the country proclaiming his success in imposing on the lives of yet more Cubans, who hoped to be living in the land of the free.

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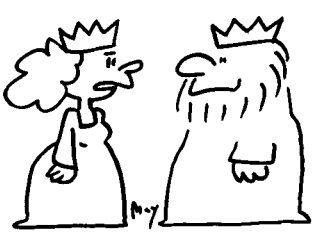

"That's your answer to the health-care crisis—'Gesundheit'?"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

For Meaningful Multilateralism

ACCORDING to the conventional wisdom, George W. Bush has embraced conventional wisdom. Sadder but wiser after the vicissitudes of his unilateral preemptive neocon adventuring, the chastened warmonger has come home to multilateralism. The other week, he had the G8, the U.S.–EU summit, and NATO back to back, and, bounced from Sea Island to Shannon to Istanbul for the privilege of shaking hands with the same handful of duplicitous Europeans in three different time zones, the president did a passable impression of someone who was pleased to be there.

In fact, most of Bush's present difficulties come not from swaggering cowboy unilateralism but from excessive deference to multilateralism in the run-up to the Iraq war. Instead of toppling Saddam before the first anniversary of 9/11 (as yours truly urged), Bush was prevailed upon to "go the U.N. route," mainly to provide his most important ally, Tony Blair, with some multilateral cover. As I wrote in March 2003, "The end result is that we'll be going to war with exactly the same participants as we would have done last August, and the one person weakened by going the U.N. route is the very one it was designed to protect: Mr. Blair. The best way to help Blair would have been to get the war over six months ago."

That would also have been best for Bush. As Michael Ledeen always advises, "Faster, please." Had Iraq followed hard on Afghanistan, it would have been trickier for the Dems to present it as a separate adventure disconnected from the War on Terror. In the 17-month hiatus between the falls of Kabul and Baghdad, the anti-war movement ballooned, and the "What War?" movement—those devoted followers of Michael Moore who believe the whole thing's just some scam got up by Bush's Halliburton puppeteers—ballooned even more.

Or, to put it another way, in adopting Mr. Blair's priorities, the president wound up with Mr. Blair's problems. Once Bush decided to go the U.N. route, he was playing not to his ally's strengths, but to his ally's weaknesses, and those weaknesses became his, too.

That's a cautionary tale for those who insist America fall in line with modern multilateral pieties. "I don't know when in the history of the alliance we've seen so many successes!" gushed the neo-multilateralist Rumsfeld at the NATO summit in Turkey. The defense secretary was using "success" in the multilateral-speak meaning of the word, which roughly translates into English as "failure." The greatest of these many successes was the decision by the alliance to expand its role in Afghanistan beyond Kabul to the country's somewhat alarmingly autonomous regions. So the enlarged NATO mission ought to be great news, right?

A Fijian security contractor in Iraq

AHMAD AL-RUBAYE/AFP

Er, up to a point. After NATO secretary-general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer put the squeeze on the alliance's 26 members, they reluctantly ponied up an extra 600 troops and three helicopters for Afghanistan. That averages out at 23.08 troops per country plus almost a ninth of a helicopter apiece. Credit where it's due, the three Black Hawks all come from one country—Turkey. But it wants them back in six months' time.

Now I very much like Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. I've met him a couple of times—before he attained his present eminence—and he's one of the most thoughtful of European politicians: well disposed toward America, not into stringing along with Chirac and the other Europoseurs. But he finds himself presiding over a sham alliance. Theoretically, it has millions of conscript troops at its disposal. But it has no ability to project more than a few thousand out of area—i.e., to any of the places we're likely to need them in the years ahead.

In other words, if a military alliance means a press release and a black-tie banquet for Bush, Chirac, Schroeder & Co. once a year, NATO works fine. If a military alliance means functioning armed forces capable of fighting side by side and killing the enemy, NATO is a post-modern joke. The big burly Fijians who've done such a splendid job guarding currency convoys in Iraq have made a greater contribution than many of our supposedly "major" allies. And, from a cost-benefit analysis, they didn't require months of endless diplomatic schmoozing by Bush, Powell, Rice, and Rumsfeld, consuming valuable time and money that, when you add it all up, makes it cheaper to add another 600 men to the New Hampshire National Guard than to chase around a dozen European capitals trying to crowbar them out of NATO barracks.

If we fight the War on Terror this way, we'll lose. Nonetheless, that's what John Kerry has just proposed in his exciting ten-point plan for Iraq:

1. Give France and Germany "fair access to the multibillion-dollar reconstruction contracts."

2. "Give them a leadership role in pursuing our wider strategic goals in the region."

3. "Realistically call on NATO to step up to its responsibilities."

4. Er, well, if we come up with a fourth point, we'll get back to you.

That's it? Bribe Chirac and Schroeder with taxpayer dollars and a couple more summits to swank around at in the hope of getting them to promise military contributions they don't have? Even by Kerry's standards, this is lazy.

If Bush survives the Blairization of his war presidency and wins in November, he needs to embark on a campaign of gently putting to sleep America's pantomime alliances. The U.S. requires real allies with real assets: meaningful multilateralism. **NR**

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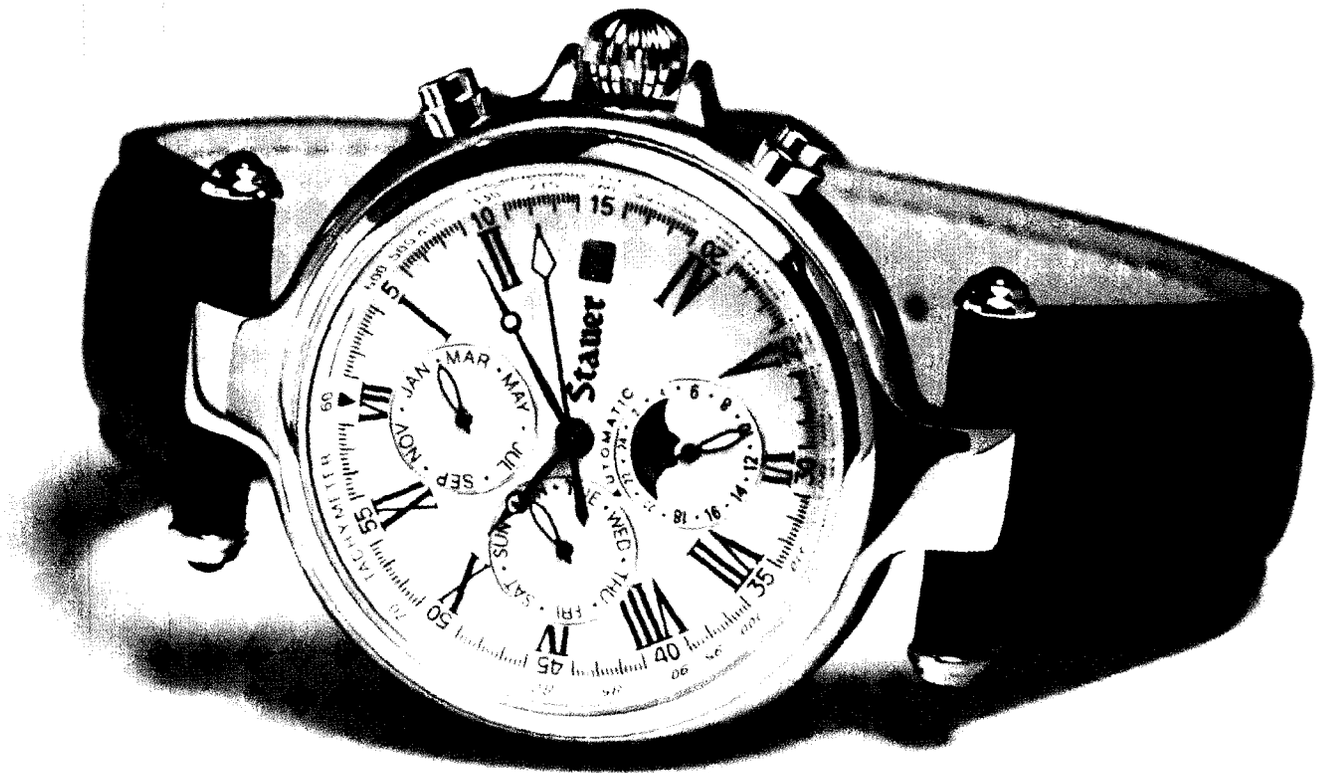

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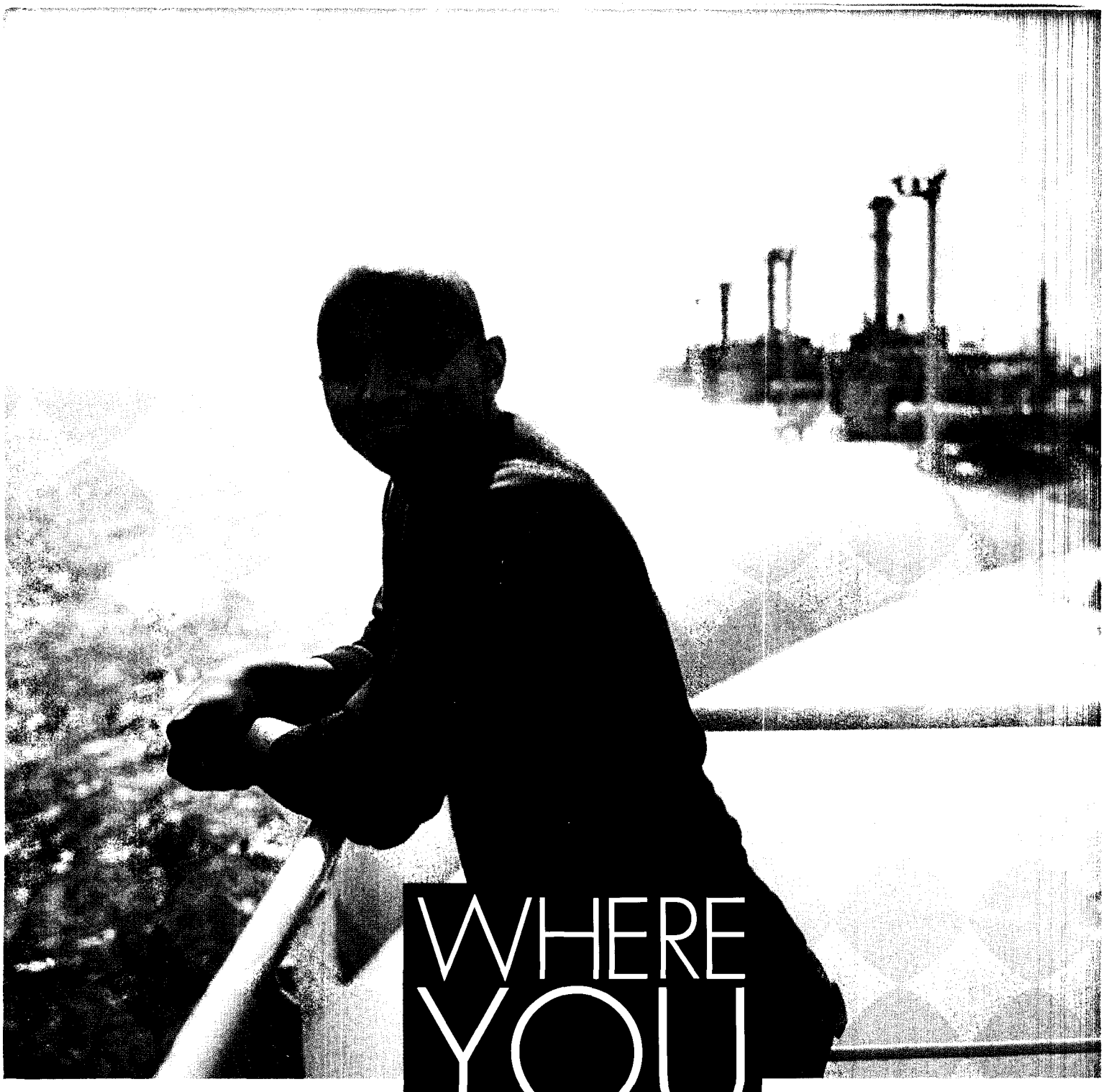

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